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THE COPPER QUEEN.

VOL. III.



THE COPPER QUEEN:

A Romance of To-day and Yesterday.

BY

BLANCHE ROOSEVELT,

AUTHOR OF

"LIFE AND REMINISCENCES OF GUSTAVE DORE," "LONGFELLOW'S HOME LIFE,"

"STAGE STRUCK," ETC.

"For time at last sets all things even,
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search, and vigil long,
Of him who treasures up a wrong."

MAZEPPA. Canto V. BYRON.

VOL. III.

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THE COPPER QUEEN.

CHAPTER I.

ENILDA and Flora had been but a few days in London when the mail brought them letters from home ; amongst others from Mr. Rozen and Florestan, and a very long one from Mrs. Chromo. Mr. Rozen was full of regret for his dear girl's departure, and fuller yet of his multitude of cares and troubles ; whilst Florestan's letter, although couched in friendly terms, in every word breathed an under-current of love which amounted to a passion ; for if Enilda had known before that he cared for her, she now read between the lines, and saw in every space a newer declaration of his affection.

Since her meeting with Claremont she had been a prey to such strange sensations that not only she scarcely dared to define them, but she scarcely dared admit even to herself what she felt now to be the

truth—that Claremont held as of old the first place in her heart. The day following her arrival she had refused to see him, and Flora had given him the coveted dish of tea; but if Enilda refused one morning, fate threw him in her path the next; whilst Lady Mildred, unsuspecting and unwearying in hospitality, so managed that not a day passed but they either lunched, dined, or went to the play together. Enilda could not plead ill-health as an excuse for not accepting Lady Mildred's invitations, for in reality she had never been so well before in her whole life. Then, too, since their meeting on the steamer, at sight of his face or sound of his voice, that strange old fascination would creep over her, and as helplessly enfold her in its toils as the boa-constrictor enfolds its victim. She had never yet seen him alone—so far fortune had befriended her—yet she dreaded to think of what that meeting might be, for she felt sure come it must some day. She was turning Florestan's letter over idly in her hand, and thinking—not of him, but of Claremont. She was suddenly startled out of her thoughts by a shriek of laughter from Flora.

“My dearest child,” she cried, “what on earth are you laughing at?”

Flora continued laughing, but explained that she was reading Mrs. Chromo's letter, and the news

was too funny. "Stay," she added; "I'll read it to you entire. If you aren't surprised I'll give in. Lucy Chromo is a dear, but between ourselves, 'Enilda chile,' as Charlotte Corday says, she's no chicken, and ought to know better. Now, Miss Chandos-Cressy, for instance: she's old enough to eat grass, but I don't believe even she would be as idiotic as Lucy is. Listen:

"DEAREST FLORA,

"You wondered why I didn't come to Europe with you; why at the last moment I had to stop at home? Well, I may as well tell you the truth, first as last. Nearly a year ago I determined that if Adam Chromo wouldn't give up the glue business—in short, retire on his laurels and money—that I would be divorced from him, as I could no longer stand the sight of those filthy, brazen carts, chirping up and down the Avenue constantly before my very eyes. The end of all is, he wouldn't sacrifice them; he preferred to sacrifice me: not unusual, dear, when you marry simply that compound of nature's cunning, classically called—man. I did not care to let New York into the secret of my domestic affairs, so have always kept the matter extremely quiet. Before the world Adam and myself have ever preserved an outward semblance of harmony; behind it—well,

not a semblance, but a reality of awful discord. Every word I have spoken to him at meals, or before a servant, has been taken down for me by my faithful Zenobia; for Adam, by his equally faithful Tristram. These conversations, I need not tell you, are destined as evidence when our case comes up for trial; the which trial, I need not say, *comes* off the first of September next. You can imagine how I feel, and what I have borne during the past year. My lawyer, Mr. Harkins, a sweet, angelic man, has heard all my pros and cons. I believe that is the legal way to put it, and he thinks that Adam Chromo is a brute, and has morally mopped the floor up with me for years. Absolute incompatibility of temper is the least I have against him. Oh, Flora! pity me. Tell Enilda all, and whatever you do, either of you, never marry an idiotic, opinionated, self-made American. Other races of men change—American men—*never*. Adam could not forget that he had, so to speak, manufactured himself. He used to boast of what he was—a Virginian stable-boy in extreme youth—and what he is *now*. I have often told him, that to a proud, even haughty—you know me, Flora, I have often been haughty, but *never* with you;—a proud, even haughty woman like myself, a Mayflower descendant, he was not Hercules, and those Augean reminiscences had an unsavoury

smell in the millionaire's parlour. I have even said, "Leave me out of the question; but you—you yourself, have you no pride?" Result! Well, girls, both of you—you see he hasn't. I wish you could have seen the lawyer's face when he took in our breakfast-table conversation, faithfully reported by Zenobia—too faithfully for Adam,—which was but one speaking instance of the brutality and humiliation we women are subject to at times. Mind, I say at times, for although the race in general deserves wholesale reprobation, I have known some masculine exceptions, of which I could name three or four on the spot. I have more news, which will keep until my arrival. What sort of a house is it? Park Lane sounds very nice. Mr. Rozen told me all about it. How many servants are there? They say June and July are the months in London, so I am counting on a lovely time. By the way, we come over in a large party—Mr. Florestan, the Count, Mr. Cherubini, and your humble servant. Let me not forget Miss Chandos-Cressy, who has just told me that she is great-aunt to a titled lady—married to an old flame of mine, John Claremont—'

"Ah!"

"What is it?"

"I—I thought some one came in; I see I was mistaken. Go on."

“‘John Claremont, whom I was once—may I say completely gone on? It wasn’t the man, but his manners, they were so different from those of all American men: but that’s over—“All’s well—that—is worth two in the bush.” I shouldn’t be at all surprised if Professor Protoplasm came with us after all. I believe he’s sweet on Miss C.-C. Something else also has happened, but that must be a secret until after my divorce has been pronounced. I am going to be presented at Court with you girls this season, as no woman, I hear, can go to Court after the little affair above-mentioned has been consummated. Ridiculous, isn’t it?—but I suppose in England they must draw the line somewhere. I am nearly dead, but must add a word to say that Enilda’s papa looks very worried and anxious. I see there has been some law-suit on for that Vane, and perhaps Mr. Rozen was worried about it. That comes of being a silent partner. I’ve always said they have all the fretting, all the responsibility, and all the work. If Adam would only become a silent partner in his own concern—but that is a dream.

“‘Don’t think I regret the step I have taken. I don’t love him, but I still have a sneaking kind of regard for him, and sometimes wonder what will become of him without me; but he deserves it. Perhaps when he finds me firm he will listen to reason.

He will settle ten million dollars on me, so that I sha'n't starve; but it seems little compared to what I have been in the habit of commanding. Of course one can live upon that, but it will be an odious thought to say to myself every day and every minute, as I know I shall be obliged to say, "Lucy Chromo, deny yourself this, deny yourself that; your exchequer is now miserably limited."

"We sail in the "Electra;" lovely steamer. I have the bridal chambers,—alas! strange mockery of a happy past. Forgive me, girls, for wilting now at the last moment, so to speak, but I cannot help it. If I don't leave New York soon, I shall rupture a blood-vessel in the brain, or somewhere else. I have said good-bye to Adam, and—good-bye I feel it is. Will telegraph arrival from Queenstown.

"With fond love, ever the same,

"LUCY CHROMO."

"Now, Enilda, what can you say to a woman like Lucy Chromo?" Flora laughed as she spoke. "Isn't she a fool to give up all that money, and—and as decent a man as one could find in the whole of America, hunt where you may? What do you s'pose the secret is?"

"I hav'n't an idea."

"Perhaps she is going to marry again."

"Perhaps."

"Enilda, how oddly you answer me; aren't you well?"

"Perfectly."

"Perfectly? Let me see." Flora took Enilda's chin in her hand and turned the fair face up to the light.

The object of this scrutiny blushed.

"Nonsense, Flora," she cried petulantly; "I am perfectly well, only—only I was wondering about—about papa. I confess I am worried. Do you think he is seriously ill?"

Enilda's eyes filled with tears.

"I think Lucy Chromo is an idiot," cried Flora. "I'm out of patience with her. Of course your father isn't ill; at worst it could only be some stock gone wrong. What is he—a bull or a bear?"

"I—I really don't know; perhaps he's both. Perhaps he may be a bear for one kind and a bull for the other; but I've heard people who know Wall Street as well as their pocket-books say that bull is one profession and bear is another. It's as different as being a chemist and botanist, you know."

"It is all strange talk to me, dear; but I don't believe it is stock; in fact I know it isn't. I asked

him once, and he said distinctly, No. Perhaps he's in love."

"Flora!"

"Well, dear, have you never dreamed that some such thing might be the case?"

"Never. Papa adored mamma. Her awful death made him a changed man. He has since devoted himself to me, and couldn't look at another woman: every day he seems to love me more. No one ever had a father like mine—like—"

Enilda stopped abruptly, although her eyes were still overrun with tears. In fancy she went back to a year ago. She was reading Claremont's letter—her father was consoling her—then she was in Naples, in Rome, wandering here, there, everywhere; he always silencing her heartaches by his infinite tenderness, his watchfulness, his constant care.

Flora kissed her.

"Dear," she said, "I won't quarrel with you about parents, although I think my own are the best 'as ever was;' only you mustn't worry about him; crying and so on: besides, you'll spoil your eyes—'the loveliest eyes in the world,' as Mr. Claremont says."

"Flora, what do you mean?"

"Enilda, don't fly at me like that. What do

you mean? Can't a man admire your eyes? A 'cat may look at a king.' I only say if a man admires my eyes, I don't see why he can't come directly to me, and tell me, instead of waltzing around to other women and saying what he thinks of me! What's that?—a 'gram';—give it here. Oh, it's for you, Enilda."

A servant handed Enilda the regulation yellow envelope.

"They've arrived," she said; "read. Lucy will be here to-morrow, and—and Mr. Florestan."

Flora jumped joyfully about like a school-girl.

"At last," she said; "now we can begin to have some fun. But two things we'll prohibit;—no talking divorce; no abusing Adam Chromo behind his back. What do you say, 'Nilda?—and—and—no talking about your pater, and—and worries."

"I must know exactly how papa is; but as to talking over her proposed divorce—that—well, that is out of the question."

"Perhaps she'll abandon the idea if we have a good go at her about it."

"My dear child, what business is it of yours or mine? At least leave her to the enjoyment of her own private affairs. Now I have something to confide in you. I have taken a growing dislike to

Count de Marcie. I see him in dreams mixed up with papa, and I can't make it out; after such a night I really wake up with—with—well, with a bad taste in my mouth, if you know what I mean by that."

"I know exactly; an encyclopædia in ten volumes couldn't have expressed it better."

"I see that Lucy Chromo is getting as thick with the Count as two peas in a pod, and I hope she won't have him here all the time; I feel I couldn't stand it."

"My dear, the house is yours."

"Oh no; I don't mean that. Of course, Lucy is kind enough to chaperone us. The house is hers; she spoke something about taking it together, and so on; but that is all nonsense. The best friends in the world fight after a month of having kept house together; dividing household expenses, and so on. I know of nothing more fatal to mutual esteem."

"Perhaps as you are not devoted chums it would work all right."

"Yes; that might be an antidote, but I am not going to try it. Papa has arranged everything. He has invited her to be my guest, but practically to be the head of the house."

"So we girls are on a visit to Lucy. How funny!"

"It is funny when you think of it; but as papa couldn't come, and your mamma wouldn't come—and he—papa—insisted on my coming to Europe, and so did Charlotte Corday—"

"My dearest Enilda, what has she to do with it?"

"Oh nothing; only—only I love her dearly. She has been like a mother to me."

"Happily she didn't nurse you; you might have been black."

"Nonsense." Enilda smiled faintly for the first time since reading her letters. "Nonsense; only Charlotte had a strange fainting-fit; and after that she kept saying, 'Let's go away, honey chile—away from New York;' and when I said papa wishes me to go to London, she seemed tickled to death, and she was so broken-down, poor thing, I thought we might as well come, so—here we are."

"She seems to enjoy London hugely, and now I think of it looks as spry as a 'possum'—to quote her words. But come, are we going to the Row or not this morning?"

"Oh yes, of course; I had quite forgotten our engagement."

"Lady Mildred is a dear, not a bit like the stiff Englishmen you read about—but what a funny country!—she, my Lady; he, plain Mister. Imagine

a husband taking a back seat in America—being only—”

“Only the husband of madam.”

“Yes; and—and do you know, Enilda, I don’t believe they’re happy together. She loves him, and he don’t love her. If I didn’t know better, I should say he’s mashed on you. It’s the clearest case of—”

In spite of herself Enilda trembled as she thought: “What! had she alone been blind? Did John Claremont still care for her?—and did he respect her—his wife—so little that he let all the world see it? Could it be possible?”

“Heavens upon earth,” cried Flora, “what fools we are! The ship is in; this gram isn’t from Queens-town at all, but from Liverpool. Why, they’ll be here in no time.”

Enilda looked again, then rang and began giving directions about Lucy’s rooms, the dinner, and—then she reflected. The Claremonts were dining there that very night; should she put them off? Flora divined her brown study.

“Let’s have a grand square-toed dinner in the impromptu line, all together. Lady Mildred is sure to like Lucy, and she won’t be too tired after the trip. What fun! what fun! Do give orders at once.”

Enilda demurred, but Flora finally had her way.

Orders were given; the girls went to the park; lunched with Lady Mildred afterwards, and two hours later were embracing Lucy and Miss Chandos-Cressy at the railway-terminus. They were all laughing and chattering "thirteen to the dozen" about the trip.

Florestan shook Enilda's hand warmly, and looked into her eyes with so glad a light in his that she felt a thrill leaping in every vein. She was sorry for him, and yet she could not tell why; only John Claremont's face always came between hers and any others, if that other happened to be a man's. Would it be ever so? She had intended welcoming Florestan warmly; instead, she turned her face away and greeted him coldly.

"Something has happened," he thought, and his heart died within him. He had counted the hours of the long voyage. Every plash of the waves against the steamer's paddle, every opaline tint which crested the little hills receding from the stern, had said to him, "You are leaving me behind, but you are going to her;" and on those fair nights when the silver moonlight made an endless track across the broad expanse of water he repeated, "One day more which separated us is gone. I am one day nearer to her." He had looked at the last crests flashing from the bow, and almost heard the last

sound of the screw as the all-potent iron cleaved the impuissant Atlantic; he had heard "All's well!" cried out for the last time; he was landed in London at last, and she—she was standing by his side saying coldly:

"So glad to see you. I hope you had a charming trip; you must dine with us to-night. Flora insists on our having a real family party."

"Flora," he thought; "ah!—she it was who asked me,—who cared to see me!"

"And, dear Cyril, you haven't brought him?"

Florestan smiled sadly.

"Cyril is with his grandmamma. I shall miss him, but mother wouldn't hear of my bringing such a little fellow so far."

"Oh, I'm sorry; I had so hoped to see him. I love him dearly."

At that moment Florestan was near hating him. "Even my child," he thought bitterly, "she loves him, but—she has no love for me." He was going to refuse the dinner; he conceived the wild project of returning to New York by the next steamer. "She is a heartless woman," he thought, "and I will think of her no more." He looked up brusquely. She was speaking to him in a softer voice; only a softer voice, one little cadence sweeter than a moment since, and at its music all his latent resolutions vanished.

"I am sure you won't plead a prior engagement," she said; "I can't let you say no. There will be some old friends; amongst others the Lady Mildred Claremont, and—and her husband,—delightful people;—also some new acquaintances, Lord and Lady St. Ermine, Baron d'Alfredi, and many others. Lady St. Ermine is a lovely woman, a poetess—not a bit of the *bas blue*."

He lifted his hands in horror.

"Prepare yourself," she said laughingly, "for a very young woman, fair, lovely, adorable; eyes like wood-violets shining with morning dew, and a face like an unfinished sketch by an old master—Raphael, for instance,—and she the *Sistina Madonna* in—in English—"

"My dear," interrupted Lucy Chromo, "don't spring old masters on me at this stage of the game." Then she added quickly, "How foggy it is! The Count got off at Queenstown, wasn't it odious of him?—but—he is coming on to-morrow or the day after."

Enilda some way breathed a sigh of relief. She was happy to think that even forty-eight hours had come between them. Florestan's voice sounded in her ears.

"You know your wishes are, as ever, my law. Of course I shall come. Eight, you say? and I add 'eight sharp.'"

The dinner was finished and the men dawdling over wine, cigars, and scandal; perhaps political, but certainly scandal. John Claremont was looking at Florestan. His brow was clouded, and a dark light sombred his eyes. He had been thus studying him ever since he had revived a very slight acquaintanceship began in New York months since. When Enilda left the room he surprised a glance on Florestan's face which roused every bad passion in his nature.

"He loves her," he thought; "and she—she has forgotten me. She loves him; but I would kill her with my own hand before she should ever marry him."

CHAPTER II.

AT last the great affair was over. Mrs. Chromo, Enilda, and Flora had gone bare-necked on a bitter day to pay court to a Sovereign whose virtues like her name were world-wide. They did not regret the biting east wind, the long drive to Buckingham Palace, the long wait before presentation, nor the gradual deepening of the skin from rose to violet, and the standing for hours before their turns came. The three had previously taken lessons from a fashionable drawing-room teacher, and at home they had rehearsed their parts; Lucy Chromo being the queen, Flora the wife of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Enilda the victim. Then the rôles were reversed, each in turn assuming the state of queen, mistress of ceremonies, and young lady to be presented. Enilda certainly excelled in grace, Flora in audacity, and Lucy in dignity. At last the teacher pronounced them perfect, and declared that from

their ease and manner they might have passed their lives at Court. "It is astonishing," she said, "how Americans get on," and added, "Ladies, I never before had such pupils. It is as if you were born to the purple."

When they saw their noses and shoulders growing so high-coloured in broad daylight, they began to think that not only were they born to it, but that they had inherited it then and there.

Few women can stand the crucial test of the Drawing-Room, and long before they reached the Palace Lucy began to grumble, Flora to fret, and Enilda to declare that "it might as well be in the evening anyway;" but their murmurings were "a vain thing," and after hours of unavoidable peripatetics they finally found themselves in the Royal apartment, where the members of the Royal Family in brilliant automatic guard stood to the right and left of her most gracious Majesty the Queen.

When the important moment came Enilda trembled like a leaf in the storm.

"I know I shall do something awful," whispered Flora, whilst Lucy preserved such a dignity that her bosom heaved and threatened to burst the bounds of her corsage, whose scantness, the fashion, the dressmaker, and her own personal courage had all mutually agreed upon. It was over: the page had

held Enilda's train; she had advanced as if she were walking on eggs; she had bowed she never could tell how; had stretched out her arm she never knew when; the Queen had placed a gentle hand thereon; and she had kissed it she never realized where.

Flora, in spite of her presentiment, had creditably gone through the same performance; but Lucy, her face in a glow, her breast in a storm, and her heart like a stone, at the last instant had dropped her superb dignity. As a super drops his mantle at the very moment he should have kept it on, so all her fine airs fled from her the instant she most needed them; she stumbled in her petticoats; she couldn't get near enough to the Queen. And the kiss that should have exploded on the royal hand rent the air a few fathoms off like a signal falling foul at sea. Then the agony about the dress was unendurable. She bent, she heard it strain, strain again, then a cunning sound like the splitting of ship's timbers in a gale smote her ear; in spite of a pound of hair-dresser's pins, her hair, not particular which end it stood on, raised, and the prickling at the roots drove all the blood from her heart to the upper part of her arms. Oh, to dare to look up; to scream, to do anything!—but impossible. Had anything happened? Happily nothing; for in spite of warnings her bodice proved stronger than her nerves. She finished her

salutation in a whole frock, but a dead faint; and if she had not created a sensation at her appearance, she certainly did on her disappearance. Proper restoratives brought her to, and when she got away from the Palace she realized the blessedness of exceptions to rules, viz. Tennyson's—

“Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, ‘it might have been.’”

It was indeed over. “The agony was somewhat abated.” Happily, although the circumstances were not the same as those Byron describes in—in one of his poems—

“Alas, we must awake before,
We know such vision comes no more;”

Lucy knew that her Drawing-Room if not her day was ended, and as they drove down the Mall in the budding twilight Enilda consoled and Flora comforted; but she for the first time in her life remarked “that she was glad America was a Republic,” and grateful tears bursting from her eyes, a calm followed the storm, and she began to think not about her presentation but her dinner. When she fully recovered the effects of her fright at what might have been, she was so grateful for the escape that she even contemplated making herself a British subject, and paved the way by sending cheques to all the

London hospitals, until her enthusiasm, like her money, gradually grew "beautifully less."

Enilda was now in the full swing of the London season. Her title of "Copper Queen" had followed her from America; she was oftener called that than by her name. Her beauty, modesty, and manners won all hearts. Royalty smiled upon her, and the upper ten bore her upon its classic but tired shoulders. She was invited to luncheons, dinners, balls, suppers, to routs and to races, to Henley and Hurlingham, to attend fish-dinners at Greenwich and fruit-stalls at Kew. Her life was one whirl of pleasurable excitement. London was so adorable that she wondered how she had ever even liked New York.

And John Claremont! As yet they had never been alone together. When they met he was full of a grave politeness, which, as she became accustomed to it, daily threw her more and more off her guard. After that farewell at Euston, where he had pressed her hand with such violence, he had never betrayed himself by a similar movement. They met as people meet who have nothing in common beyond the civilities of ordinary friendship. Enilda no longer trembled in secret, no longer pictured to herself any time when she would hear from his lips an explanation that she had once thought him bound

to give her. But would he ever make that explanation? Was there anything to say? He had married another woman, not for that other one's money—that she would never admit, but because he no longer truly loved her. It was very simple: men had done those things since the world began. “Perhaps it was half my fault,” she would say. “I didn't throw myself at his head, but I certainly made no objection to his throwing himself at mine.” Then she would go on thinking, and lose herself in a maze of fancy, whose end was what its beginning had been—irritation. Irritation against herself, against Claremont, his wife, Flora, Charlotte, everybody in general, and—Florestan in particular.

She could not forgive this latter for loving her. She treated him more coldly every day, and yet he did not seem to love her less. She could not understand it, and at such times invariably wondered if Claremont still cared for her. Her former lover's passiveness was more galling than she had ever dreamed his hatred could be. Did he love Lady Mildred? No—she was sure he did not. Women have only to spend ten minutes in the society of a man and his wife, of a lover and his mistress, to know which is the one to love. When a man loves a woman, he instinctively wants to touch her—her hair, her shoulder, her hand, or a fold of her garment;

and the merest nothing tells his passion to all the air around him. Long before he comes near her some occult power draws him slowly but surely to her. This moral expansiveness is the expression of the finest spiritual, not material, feeling, and says more for the purity of a man's affection than could a volume of the most eloquent words. The natural instinct of the soul is a finer, subtler sense than the natural instinct of the heart, and in men it is infallible, whether shown by the King towards his favourite maid of honour, or the humble student towards his Latin-Quarter grisette.

And when women love? Ah! they may have as many spiritual and natural instincts, but they are more varied, and much more difficult to define. Woman may not know her own heart, but she can tell directly what lies in another woman's. Enilda felt that if there were any passion in this case it was all on Lady Mildred's side.

She knew it was wrong, wholly wicked and detestable, yet she longed to break the icy barrier between Claremont and herself; longed to see him once betrayed out of that calm which he wore with such constant, unchanging grace. Then she thought:

"He does not care; he does it to madden me; but I will show that I can be more indifferent still."

So the days wore on, and nothing was changed.

If possible, there was only more calm; but experienced mariners know when the sea looks like a great plain of oil, the smoother it seems to-night the fiercer the tempest to-morrow. Enilda, for all she had bought experience with sorrow, was still as unversed in many of the world's signs and warnings as when she plucked the flower which grew so wild in the little old Laramie garden. She realized that Florestan loved her, worshipped her, and in the tumult of her heart she often surprised herself, wondering why she treated him so coldly—why she did not give him in return one-tenth the affection he so generously bestowed; yet her wonderment finished there. She cried bitterly to herself that no man was worth a woman's pure, honest affection; she took up her life in its glittering skein, became daily more worldly, and tried to stifle in society's distractions her present, and best thoughts, those which had been bought with the price of her youthful hopes and inestimable youthful illusions.

Enilda was thinking of this one afternoon, when she was interrupted by a visitor—none other than Florestan himself. Flora and Lucy had gone out shopping, and for the first time, so to speak, since their arrival in London, she found herself alone. When the servant announced Mr. Florestan, her first thought was to say, "Not at home;" but on reflection

she decided to receive him. He came in with so bright a smile that some way it seemed to lighten up even her own gloomy feelings. "What!" he said, "alone—I am lucky!" Then he kissed her hand tenderly.

"Alone!" she re-echoed. "I am so glad you came in; I was boring myself to death thinking of—myself."

He looked anxiously in her face, but he could not make his eyes sad; some way they were filled with a merry humour.

"Gaze upon me," he said; "I don't appear like the orthodox classical Hermes, but I am a modern Mercury, and bring you messages infinite, from at least four very important persons."

Enilda smiled. "Come and sit down," she said, leading him to a favourite corner, "and let me hear your news."

"First," he said, "a letter from your father, who misses you, but is well and very happy."

"Ah," she said; "dear papa!—that is indeed good news;—and next?"

"Next," he said, "a letter for you from Cyril written by his own hand."

"No!" she cried; "give it to me this very minute." She held out her hand. He gave her a very small square of paper, rose-coloured, with a

tiny monogram in the corner, and an enormous bird with an outstretched scroll in its beak. On this sheet of paper were written the words:

"To my dearest Miss 'Nilda, who I love very much, and send all my love to at once. My terrier was lost for three days, and a wicked boy round the corner said if I ever see him any more it would be in a sausage. I miss you very much, and miss my father. I've had my hair cut; and this winter, granny says, I'm to wear pants. I love you very much, and wish you were here to be my mother.

"With great respect, truly yours,

"CYRIL FLORESTAN."

"Don't say my child isn't a wonder," said he when she had finished reading; "and—and the last part of it."

Enilda blushed and looked down. "You have not told me the rest of your news," she said. He bit his lip, and an expression of sadness overclouded his face.

"You are right," he said calmly. "The rest is—well, I sha'n't keep you in suspense—Miss Chandos-Cressy has arrived, and so has Professor Protoplasm. I've just come from Lady Mildred's and witnessed the meeting, the first meeting between aunt and niece."

“You don’t say! What was it like?”

“Like! Well, it was most curious; it was like nothing else I have ever seen in my life. You know I’m not much of a gossip; but, shall I tell you all about it?”

She nodded a bright affirmative.

“I’m not betraying any confidence, so I think I may tell you exactly what happened. I was lunching at Allison House; Lady Mildred was showing me some new plants, when we looked up, and at the open door of the conservatory saw—Miss Chandos-Cressy. She stood there—”

“For Heaven’s sake!”

“Yes; wasn’t it odd? You know—Lady Mildred had never seen her; she had been shown by mistake into Claremont’s room, he recognized her, and sent her in as a surprise to his wife, wondering how Lady Mildred would take the apparition. She turned pale and grasped my arm. ‘Who can it be?’ she ejaculated in an altered voice; then the apparition, leaning on her ebony cane, said, ‘Don’t you know me? I’m your great-aunt and namesake, Mildred Chandos-Cressy.’”

“What a surprise! Why how on earth did she take it?”

“Take it; she took it as the little joker takes the right bower in euchre. She went up to her, and

held out both hands, but seemed somewhat in doubt where to kiss her, till looking over Miss Chandos-Cressy's shoulder she saw her husband smiling: she cried, 'Oh, John!' Then all three burst into a scream of laughter, and they hugged and kissed all round. It was very funny, I assure you. You know Lady Mildred is an awfully good sort, not a bit like a stiff Englishwoman, so she got on tremendously well with her American great-aunt, and when I left they were talking thirteen to the dozen"

"And you've no more news," said Enilda silyly.

"No; but I've a favour to ask."

"Well, what is it?"

"You once promised to play something for me; will you do it now?"

Enilda breathed a half-sigh of relief. At that moment the footman announced, "Professor Protoplasm." In his heart Florestan condemned him to the nethermost regions, but Enilda welcomed him with a cordiality that bordered on enthusiasm. She shook both his hands, and asked him a dozen questions in a breath. Was he well? Had he had a pleasant voyage? Were there any nice people on the steamer? He had come with Miss Chandos-Cressy—quite shocking. Had he seen her papa lately?—and how long was he going to stay in London?

Professor Protoplasm seemed to say yes to everything.

"Let me give you some tea," she said, then added in a stage aside: "I don't dare say a cock-tail; this is England you know—straight-laced England."

The Professor smiled as he seated himself, and drew from his pocket a gorgeous silk handkerchief, with which he wiped his lined and unusually moist forehead.

"I'll have some tea," he said; "I'm devoted to tea. Isn't it odd, speaking of that plant, that although it possesses such stimulating qualities, we, the English-speaking races of to-day, drink it as freely as we do water. Of course this taste has grown and strengthened, a sort of an inheritance handed down for generations, I should say. We could drink quarts of tea and it would have no effect upon us; but I have every reason to believe that if William the Conqueror were here to-day, and drank a single cup, as strong as we drink it, it would knock him down lifeless, if not stone dead, upon the pavement."

Enilda raised her hands in holy horror.

"Happily," she said, "no tea was sprung on him at the time of the Conquest, or—where would we all be now?"

"'Tis a serious thing to think of," continued the Professor, "and yet the question is a very simple

one—to think that perhaps the whole glorious Conquest depended at one time upon William taking or not taking a cup of tea.”

“I don’t know about taking tea,” said Enilda; “but if we are to believe history he took Matilda by the hair of her head, and, to quote Charlotte, ‘yanked’ her from her house into the very streets of Dives before a whole assembled populace.”

“Are you sure?” said Florestan. “I never heard of that; and where on earth is Dives?”

“Ah! Mr. Florestan,” said the Professor, “you won’t mind my saying it, but the world is very ignorant. Few people have heard of Dives; but those who have not only heard of but seen it, can never forget it; then, too, I have another reason ever to remember it;—but was I interrupting you when I came in? What were you doing?”

“Doing!” said Florestan, “I was begging Miss Rozen to play for me. Long as I have known her, she has never yet given me that pleasure. I had almost prevailed upon her just as you entered.”

“Let me add my entreaties,” said the Professor.

“Very well,” said Enilda, “I promise. Let us have tea first, and then you will regret you ever said *play* to me; however, I shall make one condition, Professor—that you tell us your special reason for remembering Dives. Ah! here’s the tea; shall I play first,

or will you tell the story whilst we are having tea? Which shall it be, Mr. Florestan?"

"The story by all means," and sipping his favourite beverage, the Professor began.

"It isn't much of a story," he said, "and it happened just one year ago. I was staying at Trouville, where I met American friends staying in the same hotel. One fair man, who was accompanied by a lady of great beauty, came up to me, and finding me disengaged insisted on my dining with him and his party at Dives, in the house of William the Conqueror."

"Do you know the lady?" he said. I confessed my ignorance, but added how proud I should be to know a person of such surpassing loveliness. He then introduced me to Mrs. Haller, and we were soon bowling over the smooth roads leading to the little fishing-village of Dives, which claims the honour of having given birth to William the Conqueror. The house he is said to have been born in is still standing. It is a quaint old inn or hostelry, and in one great room there is a mammoth chimney-place, and on a brick of one of the panels is scratched the names of Matilda and William."

"I wonder how many times that brick has been renewed since 1300," said Florestan, putting more sugar into his tea.

The Professor looked severe. "I have every reason to believe it to be the original tile, and would not insult history by casting reflections on that battered but time-honoured relic. But to continue. After we had looked at everything in the house, peered out upon street and courtyard from the little diamond-paned windows, dined at a rickety table off ancient and no less rickety pottery, Mrs. Haller suggested we should inspect the rear of the cottage, and take coffee at the little tables in the back courtyard. No sooner said than done; when we got there, seeing a rustic vine and flower-clad balcony running the whole length of the house she clapped her hands together and said, 'Oh, girls, what an ideal balcony for Juliet!' Then she sprang up the quaint staircase, leaned over an arching buttress, cried out, 'Mr. Malcolm, you be Romeo;' and before one could realize what it was all about, she struck an attitude, and stretching forth the jewelled hands began, 'Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?' I can see her before me now as she stood there then, and were I to live a thousand years could never forget the picture;—the twilight just fading into night; the little low house; the vine-clad balcony; the grim courtyard with a hostler's lamp—just one—lit up, and shining through a chink of the barn; and a woman, the most beautiful I had ever seen, leaning

against a little trellis one mass of rich blossom, matchless frame to her own matchless beauty, speaking those incomparable words in her own incomparable voice. I'm not given to remember what women wear, but I remember well what she wore. A dress of palest yellow silk floated after her, and seemed to lose itself in the amber-hued leaves on the house wall; it was cut in a piece from her neck down, and the shoulders were a mass of Indian muslin and rare lace. A large Leghorn flat covered her head, and two pale plumes floated down her back, mingling their gold with the auburn of her tawny hair. A knot of amber ribbon and deep red roses fastened an old-fashioned girdle, and a fan of yellow feathers swung lightly from a rich chatelaine at her belt. She leant so gracefully, so idly, against her *impromptu-loggia*, that it seemed as if she were not only a part of the balcony itself, but some gorgeous flower bursting into bloom amidst those other flowers, one and all master-pieces from great nature's hand. She seemed utterly oblivious to our presence, but went on and on in an inspired measure, which sent strange thrills all over me. She never moved from her first seemingly unconscious position. One jewelled hand was slightly upraised, whilst the other, firmly imbedded in the festoons of the balcony, clutched a handkerchief of priceless lace between its fingers.

After 'what's in a name?' she changed her posture to one, if possible, of still rarer grace, she went on and on, and finally breaking into a shriek of laughter, seized her girdle-knot and threw it full into Mr. Malcolm's face, crying—

"Ah!" cried Enilda; "and you did not know, you did not guess—why, she was Adelide Nilsson." The Professor wiped his brow.

"Yes," he replied quietly. "It broke upon me all at once, and you may imagine whose hand led the applause; but—"

"But what?" said Florestan.

"There's a sequel to the story," he added sadly; "I must tell you that. The next night she left Trouville, and as we all said good-bye at the *Athénée* Hotel in Paris, she seemed strange and wild. Malcolm left her with peculiar politeness, and that same evening she fell ill. She was ill more than a month, and once tried to kill herself by jumping from a high window facing the new Opera! No one could ever find the reason of her madness until she finally told it. 'My heart is broken,' she said; 'I felt it breaking on that night I recited Juliet at Dives, and the next day my only friend abandoned me.' She said, 'I felt the strings snap then; I will get over it, but I shall never really love again.' She got over it, and even had an unexpected revenge. A year

later she was playing an engagement in America, in—say Cincinnati—and coming down the steps of the hotel, on her way to perform Juliet, saw a familiar face behind the glass entrance-doors. It was our old friend Malcolm, reduced from passion to poverty, and from swelling style in the Grand at Trouville to sweeping out hotel-bars in ‘The Queen City’ of America.”

“Well, I never!” cried Flora, suddenly appearing on the scene. “I know servants give themselves such airs in Cincinnati that they won’t sweep out offices, so I suppose now and then the clerks and proprietors have to. I hope she played Juliet well that night, however, if she never did before. Don’t stir, Professor; I have been at the door listening to the whole of your tale, and would have wept, but the end was too—prosaic. Lucy’s gone up-stairs; she’ll be here in a minute. I’m tired to death; do give me some tea.”

The Professor was staring silently at Flora.

“Prosaic!” he repeated; “and yet they say ‘vengeance is a pleasure of the gods.’”

“Undoubtedly, when it is a personally directed affair,” said Enilda; “and—”

“My dear,” interrupted Flora, “don’t mention gods or goddesses, nor immortals—but us poor mortals. I too shall quote poetry:

“‘Hark ! what light through yonder window breaks ?
It is a fog, and London is the town.’”

“No,” said a chorus of voices. “No ; it was *so* fine an hour ago. A fog—a real fog ?”

“Yes—yes—yes ; and—yellow. By the way, how could Shakespeare ever have seen such a dawn in England ? I’ve never struck such an one.”

Enilda explained. “He didn’t see it in England ; he saw it in Juliet ; and—”

Florestan got up.

“There is no longer any excuse,” he said ; “your eyes said, ‘and I will play you something from that Opera.’”

She went to the piano. Lucy came in dragging the Count with her, and after hasty mutual greetings Enilda’s fingers executed the usual up and down preliminaries, and she began an arrangement from the old Bellini and Vacaj’s dual score, going from ‘Ove sei tu Romeo,’ to the grand finale of the second act ; thence to the still greater page where Romeo arrives at the tomb, and finds his bride in her last mortal resting-place.

Enilda played as she had never before played, and one by one her guests fell into the spirit of her reverie.

Were they in London ? Was a yellow fog creeping over the earth ? was it five of a June day ?—or were

they in old Verona, and was the last sleep stealing over "this palace of dim night?" Was daylight gone out into "inauspicious stars," was Juliet lying on her placid bier, and Romeo singing in that divinest of all inspirations, "Ah, se tu dormi, se veglia ti?"

"There was the old house in this city of the Trecento; the deep garden where a thousand flowers were in bloom, and vines loaded with the reckless wealth of a whole summer's grape; there was a lowly arbour at the foot of a serpentine walk, and underneath this arbour, standing beside a stone sepulchre lighted by midnight stars, was that young lover upon whose fair head the last star had set. Then came a rustling amongst the vines, an incautious footstep, a hurried altercation, one long wailing sob—that of a soul precipitated before its Maker. The sad sighing of the night-wind, the breath of a despairing lover, as he drinks from the imperial chalice, drinks, and—Juliet awakes."

"For Heaven's sake, stop!" cried Florestan; "I can hear no more. You have filled me with such a presentiment of evil that—that—" He stopped abruptly, in spite of himself a prey to violent emotion.

Enilda looked up wonderingly, whilst her fingers still held down the keys of that last chord. Her

face was whiter than her white hands, or the ivory enamel which gleamed from the oaken case.

Flora got up.

"I should think so," she said, "and I propose—"

"What?"

"That we all go to the Haymarket to-night and see her play the part."

Florestan came back to the piano.

"The very thing," he said. "I am like a woman, Romeo and Juliet always breaks my heart, but I can never forego revelling in the luxury of profound sentiment. And as to her, Miss Flora, of course you mean only one—"

"The inexpressible she," interrupted Mrs. Chromo laughing. "We'll send at once for a box, and if you break up there to-night, my friend, we'll send you back to New York by the next steamer." She was looking steadily at Florestan as she spoke.

Somehow, no one could ever tell how, he was beside Enilda, talking to her in a low voice. He turned and smiled upon Lucy, but continued his conversation with the former. Was she angry or pleased with his words? Evidently angry, for her face flushed and her manner expressed anything but pleasure. She left the piano hastily.

"Nonsense," she said, "you know I cannot answer now."

Flora looked up.

"My dearest Florestan," she said, "pardon the frankness of an early friend, but—but I believe you are making love to Enilda. Confess, is it so?"

The Professor stared. What had happened? He was in Dives, looking at a beautiful woman on a vine-clad balcony. Love! What did Miss Grayson mean? What could she be talking about?

Florestan came bravely forward.

"I always make love to her," he said, "every chance I get; and just then—"

"Just then," mimicked Flora. "Suppose we all retire."

But Enilda wouldn't hear of that. Suddenly she smiled and said brightly:

"You are a privileged person, Mr. Florestan, and you know I couldn't endure a man who had the poor taste not to make love to me. Yes; you may accompany us to the Haymarket."

The party was made up, even to the Count, who at that moment insisted on coming. The evening was spent at the little old theatre, and never had the lovely actress played better. Once, before she came to the great potion scene, catching sight of the Professor she stopped and put her hand suddenly to her forehead. Was she too thinking of the past—of the home of William the Conqueror—and a

page in her life which she never had dared nor cared to repeat ?

Florestan and Enilda both noticed her glance and expression. The latter seemed some way to reflect itself on Enilda's hitherto calm face, and until the end of the play never wholly left her countenance. The audience was roused to such a pitch of enthusiasm as she had never before seen. Flowers were hurled from the front to the footlights. Lucy and Flora were left without either courage or hand-bouquets, and Enilda not alone divested herself of her fairest roses, but unclasping a bracelet from her arm, flung it with her lace handkerchief so straight that it dropped fairly at the actress's feet. She was too impressed for words, and too much moved when the performance was concluded to quite realize that it was all over, and they must return home. She got up in a dazed sort of way, and only when the fair Juliet came before the curtains again and again to bow her acknowledgment, could she seem to recollect what it was all about.

Florestan said nothing, but his fine face was overshadowed as Enilda had never before seen it. Flora's voice kept rippling forth as they made their way from the theatre. Her eulogia was something to make the accepted vocabulary of adjectives turn pale for very incompleteness.

"It's all right, because Shakespere wrote it," she said; "but have two people ever died like that for love?"

"I don't know about two," said Enilda; "but—but—" She hesitated.

"Don't mention it," said Flora. "Mr. Florestan seems determined to be your companion in every thing. If you can't hit it off single, I should say the Blackfriars bridge isn't much out of our way—the night is dark—stars—out of the Haymarket at a premium—and—"

"There are two plays which always affect me strangely," interrupted Enilda irrelevantly; "one is—well, this one, and the other is, 'La Dame aux Camelias,'—I can never see them too often."

"My dear," said Flora quickly; "you can hear Nilsson or Patti, or—or that American girl in the 'Traviata' to-morrow if you like. Then there is another nice cheerful piece on at the Strand, same style, where buckets of tears fall nightly; but shall it be—"

"'Traviata,'" said Enilda laughing. "Mr. Florestan, shall you be free?"

"My life is one long rendez-vous," he said; "or rather rendez-moi, and naturally you may dispose of it and me. Which theatre shall it be, and which star?"

The Count, who had scarcely spoken during the whole evening, lifted up a warning finger, for he noticed that Florestan was about making a mem. on his shirt-cuffs.

“My dear sir,” he said, “that we will never allow. This is not New York. And ‘Traviata’—the artists?—bah! it doesn’t much matter; they all begin by singing ‘Traviata’ at Covent Garden, and end by—by acting it in the Haymarket.”

CHAPTER III.

It was the first day of Ascot. Flora was in a state of indescribable excitement, Lucy Chromo in a flutter over her dress, and Enilda pursued by a train of vague thought inexplicable to herself, and undesirable to any one preparing for the delights of the great races.

"Enilda," cried Flora, "come and help me write this note. It's to Baron d'Alfredi; he says races are almost out of his line; but if I reminded him the very day, hour, and minute of our departure he might turn up. What shall I say to him?"

"Say—oh, say anything."

"Shall I write to him in the first or third person. I rather prefer the third. I have got as far as this. Listen :

"Miss Grayson presents her most distinguished compliments to Baron d'Alfredi, and begs to tell

him that she is very well, very much obliged for his beautiful flowers, which shall be worn on her breast this very morning; and I do hope you won't forget that you promised to come to Ascot the first day—that is to say if I let you know myself; and we are going now, this very minute.

“Always yours sincerely,

“FLORA GRAYSON.”

“Well, what do you think of it?”

Enilda was absent-minded: she replied:

“Why, it reads all right. Do you care about his coming?”

“Yes I do; he's too sweet.”

“And Mr. Pastor?”

“Pastor? my dear child, when a man loves you to that extent it becomes laborious. Life is a struggle. I might as well be a washerwoman living in Turk's Row, with eleven small children on my hands to look after, and this—this is affection. I'm fond of him, so I am of chocolate, but I don't live on chocolate as a steady diet, do I?”

Enilda agreed that she did not.

“So of course I must vary my existence somewhat with the society of other men.”

“My dear Flora, do you intend to marry young Pastor or not?”

"Yes, yes; I suppose I do in time."

"Then why treat him so?"

"Why do you treat Ythan Florestan so?"

Enilda blushed.

"The case is not the same."

"Oh yes, it is; he adores you, and you like him just as much as I do Pastor. I really think, Enilda, that John Claremont is more in your line. I believe he's in love with you. What a pity he's already married! I like Lady Mildred; she's a real trump, but he—dark, silent, unsmiling, or smiling frigidly—"

"Flora, stop, how can you?"

"Thanks, Miss Rozen," said a voice at Enilda's elbow. She started violently, for John Claremont stood beside her.

"Thanks," he continued; "what have I done, Miss Flora, to deserve such a character at your hands?"

Enilda turned pale with annoyance. How much of Flora's chatter had he heard; how much?

Flora laughed.

"Well, it's the truth; you know it is. Did you hear me say—well, what were the first words you heard?—confess."

He smiled gravely.

"The first were: 'I like Lady Mildred; she's a real trump, but—'"

"Ah! no more; nothing before that?"

“Nothing.”

He laid a hand mockingly on his heart.

“Ah! ‘Tis well, Horatio.’ Enilda, isn’t it nearly time to start? I am going to put on my things.”

“Mr. Claremont, what do you think of her dress and mine? Which do you prefer? Now look well at us both, and then decide.”

She stood him off at arms’-length.

He put a hand distractedly to his forehead.

“How can I?—both are so perfect. The one I decide against I—”

“Oh, you make an enemy for life of the other,” Flora interrupted. “Beware of me.” Flora tapped him cheerily on the shoulder.

“Nonsense,” she continued; “speak out like a man. Say that Enilda’s is the sweetest, prettiest, most adorable gown, and that in it she is—”

“The prettiest, sweetest, most adorable woman,” cried another voice. Then the Count came forward, superb in racing flannels, holding a bouquet of white roses which he presented to Enilda with elaborate ceremony.

She took them with thanks, but turned paler than their waxen petals.

Claremont looked at her for one moment, then he went towards her.

“You are ill,” he said; “what is it?”

She was turning her flowers in her hand, and made him no answer. There was an angry pain in her heart. How calm he was,—how cold ! At last she knew that she was nothing to him.

“Girls, I am going to put on my things,” cried Flora, “and send this note to the Baron. I’ll be back in a moment, then we can all start off. I must hunt up Lucy too, or she’ll be late.”

“May I come too, Miss Flora ?”

The Count was calling out to her through the opened door ; but her voice answered ringing down the staircase as her heels rang up :

“Come !—I should think not ; but I’ll kiss Lucy for you in the”—her voice was getting higher and higher—“in the—mean time.”

“Count,” said Claremont, “may I have one of your flowers ? Miss Rozen, won’t you offer me a rose in—in the mean time ?”

He went nearer to her this time and looked straight into her eyes.

“Just one,” he murmured ; “one for old times’ sake.”

Her heart bounded, and as if in a vision she saw the old garden at Laramie ; the moon on the water ; she heard the rushes sing under the bridge, and the cry of the toad who sent one long flute-like note through the still air ; she heard a man’s

voice say "for ever," felt a kiss on her cheek, and—

"No," she cried sharply, "I cannot."

The Count came forward.

"This," he said, "is a compliment I never expected; you refuse to give one of my flowers to another man?"

Claremont looked up with glittering eyes.

Enilda remarked their light; in an instant her attitude changed.

"Ah, Count, that idea alters the case; now I must give him one"—she tendered Claremont the bouquet;—"will you choose yourself?"

"Thanks, no; you must choose for me, and—give it me."

She selected the most perfect flower and handed it to him. By this time she had almost recovered her composure.

"Permit me,"—she looked him full in the face. "I will even decorate you myself."

Then she fastened the rose in his button-hole; and he—he bent his head and kissed her hand, at the same time murmuring:

"Flora was right. I have never changed; I can stand it no longer; I must see you alone."

Enilda staggered backwards.

"Oh!" she gasped,—"*oh!*" Then in spite of

herself a look of triumph darkened her eyes and lit up her face to a hitherto unknown brightness. "Oh!"

"Sh—!" he murmured, and turned quickly aside. Another head appeared in the doorway. "Mr. Florestan," he muttered, then he gave her a hasty glance which said, "I know all; he loves you," and went to the window ostensibly to look out on the street.

Florestan came up to Enilda. "Ah," he said, looking at the Count briefly, "some one has outwitted me. I too had brought some flowers." He held a small parcel in his hand.

Enilda smiled recklessly; what mattered now she knew the truth? She would wear all which might be given her.

"Thanks," she cried gladly, "you know I love flowers, and these are—"

John Claremont came from the window and held out a hand to Florestan.

"These are your favourites," cried the latter, shaking hands with Claremont. "Lily of the valley and white roses." He was so happy that he scarcely noticed Claremont, whose face was gathering into a dark cloud, and whose eyes began to burn with a dangerous light.

The Count came forward.

"You must also decorate Mr. Florestan," he said blandly, "not with one of my flowers, but—one of his own."

Again the reckless smile came over Enilda's face.

"Quite right," she cried. "Here is a white rose in—in remembrance of one which Cyril sent me—long ago. Ah,"—Flora came in with Lucy,—“is it time to go?” She was fastening the rose into Florestan's coat. "Then I must put on my things. Excuse me one moment and I will be back directly."

Before Florestan could more than look his gratitude she had flown from the room, and Mrs. Chromo's voice was trilling out as clear as a cricket's; chirping about Ascot, the Royal Enclosure, the Royalties, the luncheon, the horses, the house Lady Mildred had taken at the Heath, the weather, the races; whether or no it would rain; and what a too heavenly time she intended to have.

John Claremont looked at Florestan, and the latter looked at him; neither spoke, but Claremont "smiled a bitter smile," and then turned again towards the window.

"The horses are getting restless," he said. "I think I'll run down and wait for you on the box."

"Oh, we are all ready now," cried Flora; "let's go out together. Enilda's coming along directly, and Mr. Pastor—"

“Mr. Pastor is here!” cried out that youth. “Here, and—and he brings you some flowers.”

“Well, I never!” cried Mrs. Chromo; “this is quite like a fête in the Botanical Gardens.”

“Isn’t it curious,” said Flora, sniffing her bouquet violently, “that Englishmen and foreigners never give a lady flowers? Now in New York, if a man don’t send a lady a bouquet, leave it with his card the very day after she’s introduced to him, why, she thinks he doesn’t know the usages of decent society.”

“But I—I was an apt pupil!” cried Pastor delightedly. “I did exactly that.”

“Well, naturally, after I had nearly hinted my head off the night before. You see I liked you,” Flora added with adorable candour. “I was awfully afraid you’d be found lacking, and the thing I never would have overlooked would have been that very thing. So when I saw the flowers—oh! here’s Enilda; now I suppose we may be off.”

Pastor slipped an arm through Flora’s. Then they made their way laughing into the street. There was some demur about seating them all.

“Everybody wants to be beside everybody else,” cried Enilda. “What shall we do?”

At last it was settled. She was placed beside Claremont. Florestan sat near, whilst Mrs. Chromo and the Count sat side by side. They were to pick

up Lady Mildred on the way, and the party would be complete.

Enilda now almost feared a tête-à-tête with her old lover. She could scarcely realize what he had said a little while ago. Was it true he had not forgotten her? But now that he had told her of the fact in so many words, her heart grew alternately light and heavy with apprehension. See him alone? No; that she would never do. What could he say to explain the past? what that could change their present? The assurance that he still loved her, suddenly became a care, a responsibility, which leaded her will and damped her spirits. She feared another disclosure, and felt her heart leap into her mouth as she took her seat beside him; yet one look at his face might have reassured her. It was grave, calm, impassive as ever; and later, as she dared to look at him, he was so cool, so matter-of-fact, that she wondered if he had really told her he was unchanged, or if she had dreamt it.

His talk was not of an amorous turn. He spoke of his horses, of a favourite mare who had broken her knees, and said that the right leader was a spirited beast; he hoped he wouldn't give him trouble; Then they picked up Lady Mildred, who took her place beside Florestan; and in a few moments London, with its unpoetic rows of working-men's

houses, its solitary church spires looming up now and then amidst the monotony of brown tiles and brick facings, even its outskirts were left far behind. The smoke of a distant city still floated mist-like over the moor; and the sky, now and then breaking into patches of opaline blue, told them that they were really away from the great Babylon; away into the country, where men's souls are not always like the skies—clearer, but where they seemed to be in contrast with what they had left behind.

Flora, Lucy, Pastor, and Lady Mildred kept up a constant chattering; Florestan was too engrossed with his own happiness to speak. He was thinking about the rose she had given him, and her own reference to Cyril's flower. Why had she spoken of it if it had not been a pleasant remembrance? The very first opportunity he determined to ask her to marry him, and this time surely she would not misunderstand.

At last they reached Ascot Heath. The road for some way back had been one brilliant line of drags and carriages, filled with richly-dressed women, pretty girls in smart toilettes, wearing veils which floated away from chip hats, like happy clouds in a summer sky. A light dust arose like a vapour from a hot bath, flashing eyes glanced into other eyes; the ready "Halloa!" and mirthful "How are you?"

were flung to passing acquaintances, while the confused clamour of a thousand voices—laughing, chatting, jesting, or singing all in one, made the air resound to the echo of good humour, as it resounds to the rappel of martial music. There were organs by the wayside; pianos, harps, and guitars without number; dancing men in black and white, zingaras from Granada, and zitellas from Naples; flower-girls from Paris, and orange-girls from Seviglia; pale frauleins from Holland, and swarthy tziganes from Hungary. There were white-aproned models from Rome, with dark brows and bead-bespangled collars; monkey-like Sicilians with crafty almond eyes, and the coloured soiled stays which forms a corselet over their chemise-bodies. There were Italian babes, like the Sistine cherubs, stretching out unformed hands, which like their unformed tongues still managed to articulate—money, not to mention the orthodox beggar who constantly begs, and as constantly appears with new offspring at her prolific breast. There were minstrels, whose colour changed with their song, and who twanged banjos with immoderate hand and all too moderate skill, urchins who threw missiles at passers-by, and responsive objects which were hurled back from over-crowded carts; whilst not unfrequent oath exploded like a rocket in the air.

Finally a band struck up at a distance ; outriders with their chargers pranced along the open ; there was a wild cry from the crowd, which was hurled deep down, and brought as high up again in every throat : “ There they come—there are the Royalties.” Claremont had barely time to wheel out of the way, when a noble pageant lighted the heath anew with colour, and the heir-apparent, with his all too lovely consort, was seen bowing and smiling from the depths of his frank eyes—bowing here, there, everywhere, upon his friends and future subjects. The crush of the crowd to get a sight of him was something truly incredible. It was as if they had never before seen a Royal personage. The air was filled with cries.

“ Ah ! that’s the Princess ; isn’t she lovely ? ” “ Oh, she smiled on me ; ” and another—“ No ; it was me. She bowed right at me.” Then more disputing and shrieking ; applause from enthusiastic souls ; more cries—“ That’s Lady so-and-so—did you see her ? Isn’t she too sweet ! ” and an infinity of similar expressions all truly unique and appropriate, only to be heard on a typical race-course within the confines of Her Majesty’s typical domain.

Enilda, Flora, and Mrs. Chromo had never seen anything like this before, and their vocabulary of complimentary adjectives was soon exhausted.

As they wished to see everything, the drag was stationed with other drags, and the party soon found themselves on the lawn outside the tribune, where men were anon rushing to the telegraph-office; anon tearing over the turf, rushing to the grand stand; shaking hands with friends here, there, everywhere; drinking a glass of champagne from over the ledge of some Mæcenas's box, and discussing the jockeys as they came from the paddock. One was pale, another flushed; one looked tired, another triumphant. Then, there were the horses and the races, and the odds and the owners. Some had seen the Duke of Mayburn; he seemed solemn. Perhaps Fairy was lamed. It was a well-known fact that she had refused good half-and-half after her last trial the day before; perhaps Shrimp had sold her out. It was a put-up job. Shrimp was a known scoundrel. Another would win the race, etc. etc. There was her Grace of Ormond walking with her jockey; she looking very anxious, —he certainly very angry. There was a Prince of the blood talking confidentially with a book-maker; and my lady Starfield, white as a sheet, leaning on my lord's arm, drinking a brandy-and-soda, and talking with a voice as hoarse as a rook's cawing. There were crowds, and crowds, and crowds; and Enilda noticed that they never ran twice up against the same people. The Anglo-Saxon physiognomy

was certainly predominant, and the conversation, if witty, was certainly not without a certain monotony of expression. At one time everybody seemed saying "'Pon me word;" at another, thousands of "Really nows" broke on the air; and at another, as at a given signal a whole tableau became yellow in a pantomime, so every mouth seemed to utter with one breath, "You down't say so?"

Flora was enchanted, and Mrs. Chromo's delight knew no bounds. After they had gone over every part of the ground they went to the Royal Enclosure, and paid a visit to the pavilion, where the Court stood or sat like a cluster of flowering vines on a garden wall. Enilda, as usual, was especially honoured with H. R. H.'s attention. She strolled over the pelouse with him; she talked horse to the best of her ability; she nearly killed him with her Americanisms; and they sometimes laughed so loudly together, that vinegar-eyed prudes stared right and left, and smooth-browed dowagers nodded little malicious nods with their top-knots of flaky hair in a distinct rhetoric, which seemed to say, "You see the audacity; those Americans will dare, will do, will say anything."

Florestan stood at one side sulky and silent. He was furious with Enilda. Why should she talk so

long or walk so long with His Highness? His American blood boiled.

Claremont, however, only laughed; he thought it great sport. "She amuses him," he said; "you can't tell what a pleasure it is to people who are tied down to a rigid etiquette, who are accustomed to time-servers, and subjects who dare not call their souls their own, to now and then run across frank specimens of a race who know no more than to consider themselves everybody's equal; who say what they mean without fear; who contradict a Royal Highness if they see fit as they would a plain mister; who have their own opinions about people and things; and who do not hesitate to express them freely; who treat princes—"

"Just as if they were human beings like ourselves," said Flora.

"And," continued Claremont, "who, by their simplicity and non-affectation, pay the greatest compliment they can to royal intelligences, 'one and all.'"

"Bravo!" said the Count, and "Bravo!" said other voices, as Lord and Lady St. Ermine and Baron d'Alfredi came up towards them.

"Oh, Baron d'Alfredi, here you are—of course you got my note."

He tapped his breast lightly. "It shall be found glazed and hung up before my—inner temple."

"Don't," said Pastor. "Inner temple reminds me of bricflless barristers and soulless solicitors. I am the former; and my best friend is the latter."

Flora interrupted irrelevantly:

"Baron, which one do you bet on?"

"I—oh, I always take the field against the favourites."

"But how are we to do that? You are just in time for luncheon."

"Thanks; it's easy enough; we must make up some private pools. I am rather hungry."

Making up pools was no sooner said than done. Between sandwiches, salads, shrimps, and champagne, a respectable sum was collected; the horses' names were written on slips of paper, lots were drawn, and luncheon went on uninterruptedly.

Enilda did not return; she was honoured with an offer to take food in the pavilion.

"Nonsense," said Flora; "why didn't she refuse?" But Enilda hadn't refused, and half-an-hour later she was telling her experiences to her friends.

"I am afraid I did dreadful things," she said. "When the princess got up and spoke to me I took that moment to sit down: you see I felt kind of tired, then Countess d'Ammunille,—you know that American who married a French General—well, she screamed out to me with a loud voice, quite over

everybody's head, 'You must stand when she speaks to you;'—the screaming her idea of manners, you see. I jumped up so quickly that I tipped over a little table with flowers on it, and the water ran all over her Highness's dress. Then I got so nervous that I fanned myself all the time she was talking to me, and really heard the stick of my fan break in her face. It was awful; I don't know when I have felt so uncomfortable before in the whole of my life."

The Baron laughed.

"What a chapter of horrors!" he said; "but there is nothing to feel uncomfortable about. The thing is to have acted there as you would have acted in your own home."

"Yes," added Enilda, smiling; "but I don't think I would upset tables in my own home, any more than I would fan myself and break the sticks of my fan in any one's face.

Florestan was interested.

"It was awkward," he said, "but you meant to do everything quite right;" then added, "Here I've been keeping this place for you. You must have some luncheon."

He was interrupted by a violent clamour; bells, shouting, screaming, and untold excitement.

"Oh, the race, the first race!" cried Lucy. Then she jumped about, seized a glass, and looked long

and earnestly at some dozen slender animals shooting along the track.

“Which is my horse?—I can’t make him out.”

“I see mine,” cried Flora.

“Oh,” said Enilda, “I can’t tell one from the other.”

Then there was more bell-ringing, more shouting; some names and figures run up on a tablet, and all was over. A crowd of people then poured into the track, swarmed up into the Royal Enclosure, and stood with flattened noses against the rails, and wide eyes staring through the fence, trying to get a glimpse of the Royalties and distinguished heads which so smartly went back and forth in the charmed circle. Every one that passed in or out was gazed at with sad but earnest gaze, and commented on in that regretful way the English masses have when speaking of or watching their ‘upper ten’ on a race day.

Flora turned to Lucy.

“I’m tickled to death at this,” she said, as they passed out of the gate leading on to the course. “I suppose they take me at least for a Countess in my own right. Look back at the enclosure, Lucy! isn’t it a sight? It’s as thickly dotted with Highnesses as a meadow with daisies. This is too heavenly—Baron, have I won?”

The Baron smiled.

"You have lost," he said cheerfully; "but you may have a better chance for the next race."

Lady Mildred had won the pool.

"It's a pot of money," she said, when the stakes were counted. "I—what shall I buy with it, John?"

"Keep it," suggested Flora. Claremont shook his head.

"Buy a new dress of Worth," said Lucy Chromo. "Oh! by the way, speaking of him, have you ever seen his house at Suresne near Paris?"

A chorus of "No! no!—tell us about it," was her answer.

"It's perfectly wonderful, and bears the stamp of a most original mind. I advise every woman who has ever paid a long bill to see where her money has finished. The house is a palace of about five different piles; Versailles or Schonbrunn scarcely equal it. There is one room a porcelain gallery, so filled with plates incrusting in fluted columns or pillars: so many that I wonder any are left for the world to eat on. There is one room with portraits, immense pictures, framed in double frames of Venetian point only a quarter of a yard wide each frame—"

"Dear heaven, hear!" said Enilda; "and we poor

creatures who have felt rich with one or two dress-panels, a collar, perhaps cuffs of the rare work."

"Oh, that's nothing! Besides the frames there are chairs and bed-spreads, and even table-cloths. The hangings and tapestries would not disgrace an Oriental palace. The hot-houses are princely. The library is correct, beautifully-bound books, and some old MS., with a floor of marqueterie. You know that floor in the '67 Exhibition that no one could afford to buy; well, he's bought it, and it was so big that he had to take the roof off his house and one wall down in order to get it in; but there it is, and these feet walked over it." Lucy Chromo stretched out her Mayflower No. 2's in illustration. "But the new mansion in the garden, my dear, that is amazing. Why, he's got all those fluted columns that belonged to the Tuilleries built up with brick and beautiful marbles into such a fantastic creation."

Enilda lifted both hands.

"What is it that you are surprised at—the columns?"

"Oh no; he began with the Tuilleries; it is but just that he should end there."

Lucy smiled and continued:

"Oh, I don't think he's ended anywhere yet; and the gardens—why, I never saw such gardens, such style, such flowers. He's made a sort of staircase of

marble with three landings going up to the central palace, with a wall to the left incrustated with—well, guess what?”

“We never could guess,” said D’Alfredi and Florestan in a breath.

“Oh, another historical trifle. All the bas-relief medallions of the old Hotel de la Ville. What do you think of that for classical research?”

“M. Worth is a genius,” said Enilda. “I always thought he was the most original man in the world; now I am sure of it. He alone shall be my future dressmaker. What’s that?”

A loud ringing of bells was heard.

“Dear me, the next race!” cried Flora. “I had forgotten all about this being Ascot—and my bet.”

Then there was a repetition of scrambling to see the horses, another hasty pool made up, another five minutes of breath-holding, and all was over.

Flora this time had won. She counted her money with eminent satisfaction.

“I shall put it by,” she said, “and spend it in dear New York; that’s where most of England’s guineas go now-a-days.”

At last the races finished. Laughing, chattering, and occasionally shrieking with excitement, they reached Lady Mildred’s cottage. Dinner followed tea. A band played in the gardens. Not a cloud

obscured the blue of the evening sky. There was a dance in an old oaken gallery, and a walk on the terrace at midnight, when heaven seemed one glittering circle of jewels. Crowds of visitors had dropped in, and Lady Mildred had to put up half-a-dozen unexpected guests. She was equal to the occasion, however, and even Enilda's eyes opened wide on seeing this impromptu version of English hospitality.

Neither Claremont nor Florestan had seen Enilda alone. Each waited for his turn to come, and each waited that day in vain.

The last two figures to walk on the terrace were those of Flora and Pastor.

He kissed her hand complainingly.

"Nonsense!" she said; "jealous of the Baron. Well you may be, however, but I fear he's not a marrying man. I suppose, Willis, I must marry you to—to get rid of you."

"If you only would; will you never give me an answer?"

"Yes, good-night; to-morrow,—to-morrow you shall know your fate."

CHAPTER IV.

ASCOT week was over ; Lady Mildred's guests were dispersed ; and most of them back in town ready to begin the old treadmill of society.

Enilda was in a state of feverish excitement, at one moment wildly gay, at another in a state of the deepest despondency. She had not seen Claremont alone, and had prettily baffled every effort of Florestan's to get a chance to speak to her in private. He was not unhappy about this, however, as he some way felt that she was no longer indifferent to him. He saw her every day ; he could touch her hand, her dress, a fold of her garment ; could now and then look into her eyes across a crowded dinner-table ; perhaps meet her accidentally flitting along some corridor ;—could give her a flower, or ask for one. Then too, there was always Cyril to talk about. He was an endless theme, and never failed to attract and keep her attention. The hours slipped by, and

yet Florestan did not seek to hurry events. He lived in sweet security, and a certain dreamy unconsciousness of the lapse of time. He said to himself:

“I will not worry her; I feel, I know, she must love me. Perhaps she will be the first to let me know that she will accept her fate. Perhaps that day will come soon.” Then he fell to dreaming again, and built castles in the air like a school-girl who packs her boxes to the happy tune, “This is my last term, —now for the future.”

The following Monday there was to be a great musicale at Baron d’Alfredi’s. The Baron and Enilda were almost neighbours; and the latter’s house in Park Lane was only removed from hers by a few numbers. In fact Flora declared that she had been the means of the acquaintanceship; for she had noticed the fair nobleman standing on his terrace of a morning. They had exchanged looks across the leads, and later when they had met at a party a swift pact of friendship was concluded on the spot.

The Baron was fair, handsome, agreeable, and had a certain gentleness which was more like a woman than a man. His eyes were blue, deep, and soft; his face was pale and overspread with an habitual tired expression, which attracted every one’s immediate attention and sympathy. His features

were clear-cut and tired-looking; his blonde whiskers waved with an air of supreme indifference; his smile was soft and slow; his laugh perfectly cadenced but not contagious; when he smiled he exposed a small mouth opening wearily over very white and perfect teeth. His whole appearance was one of extreme naturalness, extreme sensitiveness, extreme nervousness, extreme gentlemanliness—but extreme weariness.

Flora adored him. She told him as much on one occasion, but he had laughed and said:

“I am old enough to be your father; just think how proud I should be to be papa to such a pretty child;” but Flora wouldn’t hear of that at all. She alternately teased and tormented him. She asked him the most personal questions, and one morning invited herself to chip in to breakfast with him, in order, as she said, to see every bit of his house, and have him tell her all about it, which he did most modestly; declaring there was little to see, and nothing at all to tell. By the time the day arrived for the musical party, Flora could scarcely decide in her mind which number in Park Lane she really lived in—whether in Enilda’s great mansion or in the Baron’s spacious and lovely home.

The morning of the party both the girls were sitting with Lucy discussing their dresses—an endless

theme—and some invitations which they were about to answer.

“Now,” said Lucy, “just listen to this, and they call English a language. Why, it’s like the weather in London—there’s no climate, only samples. How can one ever spell names rightly when they’re all pronounced wrongly? I’m going to spell every name just as it sounds;—here you are to Miss Chumley—to Mrs. Beecham—to Mrs. Lewson-Gore, and to my Lady Cooper;—they’ll go fast enough.”

“Why, Lucy, how queer! Who would ever have dreamed in dear America that Cholmondeley was pronounced Chumley; Beauchamp, Beecham; Cowper, Cooper, and so on? How did you find it out?”

“The Count told me.”

“Seems to me you’re very intimate with him,” hazarded Enilda.

Lucy flushed.

“I value his good opinion above that of all other men,” she said.

“Have you ever told him so?” said Enilda.

“I didn’t need to tell him,” said Lucy courageously; “a man of his superfine instinct could not but feel the appreciation he is held in by every woman.”

Flora and Enilda exchanged glances, but said nothing. The morning was spent dawdling in the

Row ; lunching for a change at an Italian café, and the afternoon at the Academy, where the President's pretty women were duly admired ; likewise Master Tadema's Greek figures, classic amphoræ, and natural mosaics, and Millais's cherubs, which remind us of the Greuzes and Reynolds of the olden time. They paid several calls, drank five cups of tea with five different acquaintances, took a turn in the Park, received callers between six and seven, dressed, dined, and finally found themselves walking between a row of correct lacqueys in the vestibule of the Baron's very perfectly-ordered mansion.

The Baron was a man—a true man in every sense of the word—and yet he was unlike other men. There was a something womanish in his nature, which betrayed itself not only in his person but in his house. In the adornment of the rooms, in the decoration of his furniture there was little evidence of masculinity, but everywhere the touch of a woman's hand. The mansion from cellar to garret was distinguished by that aroma of daintiness which usually is the sex's sole province. There was a refinement and elegance in the smallest object which bespoke his supersensitive nature, and fastidiousness seemed as distinctly a part of his person as perfume is a part of the rose.

On this particular occasion one recognized every-

where this subtle odour of feminality. One felt it in the books and fragile bric-à-brac; in the pictures which were hung on the walls; in the statuettes and inlaid cabinets filled with a thousand trifles collected by a palm seemingly as delicate as Eve's or fatal as Helen's; in the tables heaped with costly trinkets; in the little brackets here and there, holding vases carelessly filled with flowers, a blossom hanging over the side perhaps, or a vine trailing unconsciously on some tapestry cover; in a little writing-desk in an out-of-the-way corner, whose wax and seals, violet ink, crystal paper-weight, and torn envelope, suggested some hastily-begun and as hastily-finished letter. There were divans, with lace antimaccassars and monogrammed cushions; a foot-stool peeping forth from the carved legs of an easy chair, and a book open, with a paper-cutter between its leaves; there were numerous jewelled frames enclosing innumerable fair faces; miniatures smiling forth from dark velvet backgrounds, anon reposing on golden brackets, anon encrusted in some dainty panel of the daintier walls; a piano with ivory keys borrowed a deeper tint from the pale marqueterie of its case, and a music-rack with the sheets of music all awry, held a page of Costa's 'Mignon,' and Tosti's 'Ti rapirei,' folded in together, as if a hasty voice had tried one after the other,

and thrown both aside with equal impatience. A jardinière of graceful palms in a corner cast flickering shadows on the tinted walls; a box of ferns and fine grasses stood near an open window whose heavy curtains were drawn aside, even the inner lace was caught back with knots of amber ribbon; the jalousies were uplifted, and through one crystal half-opened pane, the brightness of a starry night gleamed on the white and green of a matchless terrace, whose flowers, like an endless garden, lost their verdure in the verdure of the Park beyond. This light fell steadily on the marble floor, graciously adding its silvery radiance to the roseate tints which streamed gently from the shaded waxen tapers of the drawing-room.

As Enilda and Flora went forward, they were received by the Baron's sister and family doing the honours of the evening, whilst standing to her right were Florestan, Lady Mildred, and her husband. The rooms were already crowded; the Prince had just arrived, and the music just begun. There was an incessant hum of polite chatter; a few brief chords were heard on the piano; and the notes of a clear soprano beginning the inevitable 'Una voce poco fa.'

The Count, who was just entering with Mrs. Chromo on his arm, stopped suddenly.

"Surely," he said to the Baron, "I know that voice."

The Baron laughed gaily, and turned to Enilda.

"A little surprise which I had planned for you. We have Patti and Scalchi, and numbers of other singers, but I thought you would like to hear an American soprano—Signora Foresti."

"Charmed, I'm sure," murmured Enilda, while Mrs. Chromo harshly interrupted:

"Count," she said brusquely, "why didn't you tell me Miss Foresti was in London?"

She opened her fan with a whirl, and began to fan herself violently. Flora stared open-mouthed. What a strange tone of voice! Had Lucy gone crazy?

"For the best reason in the world," the Count replied cheerily; "I did not know it myself."

At that moment young Pastor came up to Flora.

"Mind," he said, "I am to take you in to supper;" then he added in a whisper, "Have you told them yet?"

"Nonsense," said Flora, sharply. "Don't breathe on my hair like that; you're positively walking up my dress. Of course I haven't told them; perhaps I've changed my mind."

He turned really pale.

"What are you two quarrelling about?" said D'Alfredi.

"I was telling him perhaps I'd changed my mind—about having supper," answered Flora promptly.

Mrs. Chromo caught the word supper.

"What, are you hungry already? Well, I suppose it's not poetic to say so, but I am—I'm starved," she cried.

"To think such words should ever be heard in my house," said the Baron.

"Just the place to hear them," proffered the Count quickly. "One should bring an appetite here, as one brings a fan or a button-hole flower."

Claremont offered his arm to Enilda. The soprano had just reached the 'Io sono docile.'

"May I tell you something?" said Claremont earnestly. "I thought I had often seen you looking well before, but to-night you are positively lovely."

She smiled. "I'm glad of that!" she answered. "It always makes me feel happy to know that I am looking well." Her eye fell on her dress.

"It's my favourite colour," he said, his own following her glance. "Blue is true, you know."

"Ah, I suppose being a colour it knows no better than to be true; now, were it a man, for instance."

"You are unjust," he said shortly; then he added

in a softer tone, "It's very hot; suppose we try and make our way through that crush to the terrace."

"No!" she replied. "I don't feel the heat, and—I don't care to walk on the terrace." She was interrupted by a cadenza of such miraculous elaboration that every one involuntarily held their breaths.

"She's singing admirably to-night!" said Florestan, coming up and holding out a careless hand. "I thought I should get a chance to speak to you sooner or later." He nodded coldly but politely to Claremont. "You are looking, need I say it—charmingly."

"I did my best," she interrupted.

"Your worst would have been anybody else's best," said Claremont, not to be outdone by Florestan in civility. Then he added:

"It is so hot that I've just been trying to induce Miss Rozen to take a turn upon the terrace."

Then he stopped abruptly, whilst Florestan could not prevent a look of intense anxiety coming into his eyes. Claremont noticed it, and purposely said no more; he seemed to enjoy Florestan's suspense. Enilda was the first to speak.

"Don't be jealous; he asked me to go, but—I declined."

Florestan quickly caught her bantering tone.

"It was quite right of you," he replied. "You

know you would have broken my heart had you walked alone with any man on any terrace."

Claremont could not help a deep flush passing over his face. He was about to make some remark when a hand lightly tapped his shoulder; his wife stood beside him.

"I came up," she said, "to say we are to go to the royal table to supper together. H. R. H. proposed it. - Patti is going to sing after, then we can all get into a quiet corner. She's to sing four songs—the Ernani cavatina; bolera from the 'Sicilian Vespers;' the Romeo and Juliet waltz; and Dinorah shadow song. Isn't it wonderful her singing so often?"

The cloud had left Claremont's face. "As wonderful as it is agreeable," he said. "One can never hear too much of that golden voice. How did Forresti dare to sing 'Una voce' when Patti was in the room?"

"Americans will dare to do and say anything!" said Enilda, and for an instant all talk was at a standstill.

Then a dark-eyed, handsome young man made his way through the crowd, and seated himself at the piano.

"Whom are we to hear now?" said Lady Mildred. At that moment Miss Chandos-Cressy came up on the arm of Professor Protoplasm.

"Oh, is that you, auntie?" said Lady Mildred. "You look as if you knew the young man; do you?"

"That I do," said Miss Chandos-Cressy cordially. "His name is Eugène Hope, and he is one of the sweetest singers in the world; his father was a Baltimorian-Huguenot, an old friend of mine"—then Miss Chandos-Cressy sighed as if in memory of a tender past. The young man began to sing, whilst she lifted her glass, the famous French lorgnon that used so to impress Flora in days gone by in Chicago, and as of old the enamelled handle threw a dark shadow on the rose of her delicate cheeks: she stared idly not at the son of her old friend, but at the famous Madame du Barry who hung in pink and white perfection on the opposite wall. Professor Protoplasm followed her glance.

"When he has finished singing," he whispered; "I will tell you my private opinion of the du Barry." The song stopped suddenly. "I don't believe D'Aiguillon was her confidant; I don't think she had anything to do with the dismissal of the Parliament in '71. I don't believe she wasted the treasures of the State, and she must have been so fascinating that Robespierre was a brute for arresting her."

Miss Chandos-Cressy dropped her glass. "Professor," she said severely, "I am afraid you were won over by her pretty face." Then she lifted her glass

and stared long and earnestly at the painted courtesan.

"No, indeed, not her beauty," he responded; "but she really had some good traits; you know she protected men of letters and artists of the time."

"Stop," said Miss Chandos-Cressy again severely; "she only did that because she feared their ridicule."

"What are you discussing?" said Enilda. Miss Chandos-Cressy's tone changed from severity to graciousness.

"Only discussing one of Louis XV.'s favourites, a person who lived many years ago, and whom you never would have met in society, unless in Chicago, or New York."

Flora was standing near Baron D'Alfredi; she did not point, but she looked at the old gentlewoman and said slyly to her host:

"Gaze at her and take her in—in penny numbers. Isn't she wonderful? I call her the little old woman who lived in a shoe."

D'Alfredi shook his head. "You're a wicked girl," he said, but he laughed and smiled with her just the same.

Miss Chandos-Cressy had altered but little in appearance. She still wore her white hair piled immoderately high on her small head; her complexion was still the same pasty mixture of bismuth

and Oriental cream ; her violet eyes, shaded by brows like two bands of black velvet, were as luminous of belladonna as of yore, and as heavily shaded underneath with artificial black as they ever had been ; the same unfading rose bloomed on her withered cheeks ; the same cherry paste incarnadined her lips ; the same ebony cane supported her limping footsteps ; and the same jewelled chatelaine for fan, handkerchief, and lorgnon depended from her shapely waist. If anything she seemed younger in appearance. There were a brightness in her eye, a cheeriness in her smile, and an airiness in her gesture which betokened that season when the earth bursts into verdure, the tree into blossom, and the bird into song. As she made her way through the rooms she was followed by the remarks, looks, and opinions, which follow in the wake of a shooting-star, or some agreeable phenomena in nature. No one knew how she got herself up, but every one respected that effort to put the best foot forward, which the world not alone exacts, but alone knows how to appreciate. Assume a virtue if you have it not, or assume a complexion if you have it not. Miss Chandos-Cressy certainly did the latter, and by so doing was convinced that she had fulfilled all obligations towards a generous world but an incomplete nature.

She knew every artist who had ever sung. She

spoke of Grisi as if she were still carolling 'Qui la voce' on some back staircase. She remembered Pasta and Parodi, and even told tales of Catalani, whose song like whose motto was gold. She remembered Persiani's music-box and Sontag's silvery voice, and stopped the Professor as they neared the piano to tell him that an Italian singer named Tedeschi had such a mercenary father, that one night he kept the house waiting three-quarters of an hour before the opera began, to weigh his daughter's salary to a fraction, exacted and paid the moment before she began to dress; on this interesting occasion the scales had broken down during the operation, and the audience, she amongst the number, had to wait whilst another pair of weights was fetched.

"They're adorable to listen to, these singers," she said; "but it is heart-breaking to think that their one idea is money. They're grasping, one and all, and every note that comes from their throats must have its equivalent in filthy lucre. Why don't people sing as birds sing?"

"Most of them do," said Flora, who came up at this moment, "just about as wildly, with just about as much sense, and always when you don't want 'em to. The genuine canary is the average opera-singer of the day. Shut him up, he howls; put him in the

sun, he feeds ; sit down to table yourself, and he begins yelling."

Flora's remarks were suddenly stopped. The Diva began, and a sudden silence fell on the assembly. One song after another followed. H. R. H. led the applause, congratulated her enough to turn anybody's head, and her music ended, the signal for supper was given by H. R. H. leading the way to a brilliant room panelled in white and gold, hung with superb portraits, and lit up with a perfection as rare as original. Cunning globes of electric light, peeping forth from branches of waxen tapers, shone as conspicuous in their setting as the Regent amongst crown jewels.

Lady Mildred, Claremont, Enilda, Flora, Florestan, and their party found themselves at the daintiest board, where wit flowed with wine, good-humour was the bill of fare, and laughter rang as freely out as the bursting of champagne corks.

There was a great deal of disgust felt amongst other guests who had not been asked to sup with royalty. The Americans were loudly condemned ; their names sneered at ; their fortunes discussed, and their beauty questioned ; their manners execrated, and their general conduct be-rated ; their clothes alone "got off" without the wholesale scathing. Enilda received the lion's share of condemnation.

The name, the Copper Queen, was echoed on all sides. "What is it?" said one; "mines, tallow, petroleum, or pinchbeck?" and after supper, when she passed through the room on the Prince's arm, remarks were made in her very face, not all complimentary, but all more or less vulgar. It had been bruited about that she possessed wit with wealth. Her beauty none could gainsay; her fortune was reputed colossal; her toilette was the richest in the room; her jewels the rarest;—in fact, it was a home blow that night to many an illustrious noblewoman whose family diamonds but not her pride had diminished, to see perhaps one of the heirlooms of her house glittering on the bosom of this younger child of a younger branch, belonging to a younger country and a younger race.

Count de Marcie and D'Orbach overheard some of the grumbling. Lucy was on his arm, and once she stopped suddenly and turned pale; she declared she heard the word "glue."

"What!" she cried, "even here. Why, I thought all one needed to-day in London was money."

"It's about all one needs anywhere," replied the Count; "and here, having everything else,—birth, title, and position, one may permit oneself the luxury of tolerating that which is all the world anywhere else, yet when you come down to it will

never be anything but money in England. It's a caprice like any other—ah !”

The Count stopped abruptly. The Prima Donna, Mademoiselle Foresti, was coming towards him, accompanied by her lady companion. Lucy looked sufficiently annoyed, but the noble D'Orbach was quite equal to the occasion. He stretched forth his hand with a very grand air, and his face was wreathed in smiles as he thanked the artist for her singing, told Fraulein Marx that she “was looking extremely well,” remarked “that it was a magnificent evening, he was surprised to see them in London, and—could he be of any service?”

“Yes,” said Mademoiselle Foresti, half-curtly, “Fraulein Marx is feeling rather faint, and—and—I hardly know how to say, but—will you take her to have some refreshment?”

Lucy started, and D'Orbach murmured a few unintelligible words. The last were plainer :

“Quite at Mademoiselle's service.” Then without more ado he offered his arm and walked away with the Fraulein.

CHAPTER V.

FRAULEIN MARX had black eyes, fair hair, a clear-cut profile, and a mouth that betrayed an indomitable will. A smile, the very autumn of perfidy, traversed her face as she walked along through the now half-deserted rooms. All the world was at supper, and yet there were still crowds everywhere. A delicious band sent tender strains out upon the air. The French windows were open, and an odour of heliotrope and mignonette stole through, mingling their fragrance with the heat of the drawing-room, that smell of bouquets of every conceivable flower, of perfumed robes and old laces, toilette-powder puffs, and Oriental cosmetics; in short, the indescribable, commingled cosmopolitan perfume of a crowded drawing-room, in a great city, on a hot night.

"Let us go to the terrace," said the Fraulein softly; "I do not care for refreshment other than

a breath of fresh air. I think it will be less crowded there than here;—but, Count, you are looking pale, the change will do you good.”

“You are a fiend incarnate,” he muttered under his breath; “at least speak German.”

She raised her heavy black brows.

“Shall it be the terrace?”

“No,” he answered; “I wish to talk with you. There is a tiny library here that I know well; we will go to it; but we must first seem to take some supper.”

They re-threaded their way through the rooms viâ the dining-room, and finally crossing a wide ante-chamber, reached a little apartment, dim, silent, cool, and shadowy; it was unoccupied, and the Count had chosen wisely in thinking that they could there converse undisturbed. The room was like the rest of the house, a gem in its way; only to-night it seemed strangely deserted, and the very sort of place in which to talk secretly. A shaded lamp cast flickering shadows on the wall; the heavy curtains were hermetically sealed; a bronze clock on the chimney-piece had run down; and the walls were tapestried so thick that no sound of the outer world could by any chance penetrate. Graceful curtains fell before the opened door in such ampleness, that it might as well have been shut for all one could tell outside

what was going on within. The Count motioned his companion to a seat. She looked at it, at him, and then deliberately sat down in another. She opened her fan, and began fanning herself in silence. Was she waiting for him to speak? Evidently. She had not long to wait. His words were brief, but to the point.

"You are a clever woman," he said; "how did you get to New York, how find me? I—I thought—I had hoped that you were—dead."

She still fanned herself, but responded with the utmost graciousness.

"Naturally; but shall I tell you? Yes? You see I am not dead, and—and it was not difficult to find you; the difficult thing was to get away from—Toulon."

"Hush!" he said, glancing warily around; "hush! walls have ears; not that name here."

"You are sensitive," she sneered. "Toulon now-a-days means cholera, or—anything rather than—"

"Go on."

"After you left me on that night, to do as best I could, I only fell from the frying-pan into the fire. I was arrested, tried, and transported; but by making love to one of the keepers, I managed to make my escape. I got to a river and a boat, and—a boatman took me in."

"Ah!—that is how I heard you were drowned."

"Most likely; but the boat was none other than the one prepared for you, and the boatman none other than Ricard who loved me, but whom you were fool enough to hire to put me out of the way."

The Count turned ghastly with rage.

"Don't tell me that," he said; "is there then no more honour amongst thieves?"

"No; this is an age of progress; there used to be, but dishonour pays better."

"Spare me your wit; but he shall pay me well for this."

"You owe him a deal," she said calmly. "It was through him I heard of your escape, your arrival in New York, your combination with—"

"I defy you to speak that name here."

"Oh, as you will; but—you don't ask me what I want."

"I received your letters in New York; they were plain enough?"

"I think my speech can be plainer. I thought I was your wife, a countess,—ha! ha!"

Then she laughed so long and so loudly that the very light seemed to flicker anew on the ceiling.

"Are you mad? Tell me what you want; I can't stop here for ever. Is it money?"

"No."

"Is it position?"

"No."

"Is it—" Then a sinister look crept into his eyes.

"Yes," she said; "it is revenge."

He began rapidly pacing the floor, up and down, up and down, until the room seemed rocking.

"You might have trusted me," she continued. "I was your creature body and soul; did you imagine for one moment that such crimes as yours, such a life as yours, could ever remain long hidden? They say—"

"Never mind what they say. I want to know all you have to say, and to end this conversation."

"You are impatient. Why did you run away from New York? Why did you leave your interests, and—and that idiot of a Foresti;—but now rest in peace. She knows all!"

"All!—good God, are you mad? What do you mean?"

He abruptly ceased his walking up and down. "All what? Has she dared—?"

"Oh, nothing! She came across one of your letters to me, and thinking you were in love with some other woman, fell into hysterics, and confessed everything. She couldn't have come to a better

person, your own lawful wife; I—I assure you I consoled her.”

“How did you come to be with her at all?”

“I followed you to Ems; but being interested in a good-looking young banker, hadn’t time then to interfere with your love-making; only when you went to New York, Ricard, who still adores me, told me I had better be on hand in—well, in case of need. I didn’t know you had gone so far with the singer. Bigamy was the one crime of which you were not guilty. And now—”

“And now?”

“Well now, what do you propose to do about it? Well, I’ll not be hard upon you; I said I wanted my revenge, but I want more than that.”

“You want money?”

“Yes; I want money, but no paltry sum.”

“Well!”

“I want you to give me two hundred thousand dollars.”

He interrupted her with an oath. “Are you crazy? Two hundred thousand dollars! Where am I to get the money? And if I could get it, why should I pay you such a sum?”

“You will pay me that to get rid of me for ever! I promise to give you every paper I possess that could criminate you. I promise to give you our

marriage certificate, and to deny ever having known you, and I promise to take myself out of your sight for evermore."

"And the consequences if I refuse?"

"Ah, if you refuse!—but you won't refuse."

"I tell you I must refuse for the best of reasons; it is absolutely impossible for me to get together such a sum of money."

"You have rich friends; you can borrow it. Mr. Rozen, for instance."

He lifted a warning finger. "Hush!" he said; "I thought I heard some one coming this way."

She stopped, and held her open fan uplifted in the air. For a moment both listened attentively. Foot-steps were heard coming towards the door, then passing it, and were finally lost in the corridor beyond.

Fraulein Marx was the first to speak.

"Whether you can get it or not, you'll have to, for I'll not take a cent less, and I must have it soon."

He made no reply, and for an instant seemed to be reflecting deeply.

"You are thinking it over," she hazarded, and again began fanning herself. "I will give you time to consider."

"Devil!—if I could believe you. No, no, Adèle, it won't do; I've no assurance that you would not play

me false. What proof can I have besides those papers?"

She hesitated a moment. "You forget that my position in one sense is not all that heart might desire—that I am, like yourself, an escaped convict."

"D—m it!" he said, "will you stop using those names here?"

"Well, perhaps you're right; we ought to understand each other almost without speaking. I will tell you the truth; I want to go away with somebody; I want to marry, and lead a respectable life."

"Ah, how touching!"

"Yes, isn't it? Besides, America is getting too hot to hold me, and—I don't wish to be personal, but—I think you yourself had better be looking out."

Did he turn a shade paler, or did she imagine it?

"Nonsense!" he said. "You are the only person who stands in my way, and—"

"And I suppose you'd like to put me out of it. That game won't do, Fritz; and let me tell you here that if anything happens to me your head won't be safe an hour. I hope you won't think that anybody could make me forego my revenge, nor anything less than the sum I have named. Ah!"—she got up quickly—"we must be going back to the drawing-room; it is so long since I have had the

pleasure of a conversation with you, that I had really forgotten the lapse of time."

"Don't say that again. I'm in no temper to stand your sarcasm; don't drive me too far. I tell you I cannot give you two hundred thousand dollars— Ah! permit me"—here several persons sauntered idly into the room. She accepted his offered arm. "I think I once saw the miniature here, the most perfect likeness of Madame de Lamballe, they say, that exists."

The Count and Fraulein Marx made the usual salutations as they passed from the room.

"They could not have overheard us?" she whispered.

"No." Then he added in a louder voice, as if proceeding with an ordinary conversation: "And if I get it, it could not possibly be before my arrival in New York." They were getting into the crowd again. "And when do you return?—shortly?"

"Shortly."

"I thought it was most imperative. Shall you be leaving this week?"

"Scarcely; that is to say, I have not decided; but—" A strong pressure on his arm finished his sentence in a more decided manner. "I think it just possible I may go on Saturday," he added.

"Pray," she said with an eager voice, "do not go

without letting us hear from you beforehand; you know Mdlle. Foresti regards you as her most valued friend."

At that moment Mdlle. Foresti was seen coming towards them. She bestowed an angry glance on the Count.

"Where have you been so long?" she said querulously. "I'm tired to-death, and my carriage has been waiting more than an hour!"

"Must you go?" said the Count. "At least let me see you out."

"Thanks," said Fraulein Marx, cordially, "we could not think of taking you away so early."

"Ah! you insist on coming," said Foresti. "It is indeed good of you."

Then the Count offered his arm, and the three left the room together.

The Baron, Lady Mildred, Enilda, and several others were taking ices on the terrace. Flora's voice, as usual, was heard high above the rest.

"It's the dodgiest thing I ever heard of. Baron, tell Enilda about your house."

"Oh, there's nothing to tell."

"Except that it's all a delusion and a snare," put in Flora.

"Quite right; all a delusion and a snare," he repeated. "You know, as Hamlet says, 'Look at

this picture, and then on that.' Here, for instance, we have a marble pavement, lovely ladies in lovely dresses, roses, trees, palms, and flowers; but turn over this marble, and what do you see on the other side? Palms, roses, and lovely forms? Nothing of the kind. Sweltering cooks in white caps, joints of beef, legs of mutton, featherless birds, bunches of asparagus; and instead of this lovely panorama under a sky filled with midnight stars, a long low kitchen bustling with ranges, and the walls decorated with endless pots and pans."

"Yes; I know," said Flora; "like that old diplomatist who has just left, who had a whole *latterie de cuisine* on his breast in the shape of decorations."

"Exactly," laughed the Baron.

"A polite way," said Enilda, "of suggesting that the heart of your house resembles the venerable diplomatist's breast."

"And shows conclusively that, like your terrace, there are two sides to every question," added Florestan.

"But, happily, like the terrace, you only see upon one side at a time."

"Though, like the Baron," said Lady Mildred, "we know how to appreciate both."

The sounds of a waltz came floating through a

window. A celebrated pianist was playing ; not one of Chopin's immortal inspirations, but a rollicking tune.

"Dear me," said Flora ; "I'm dying for an American three-step ! Baron, may we dance ? Whoever that is playing, he has a perfect Vienna beer accent. You know, Enilda, just the way they play in the garden next the Thalia Theatre in New York. But, Baron, may we ?"

"You may do anything you like in my house."

Flora was too late. The Prince had already set the example, and was whirling round with Enilda's predecessor, the last but one imported Transatlantic professional beauty. Soon the floor was filled with flying couples.

"Dancing on the carpet ?" cried the Baron. "Never !"

"Oh, that doesn't matter a bit," said Enilda, as his arm encircled her slender waist. "Dancing, like gambling, is a passion ; who loves dancing will dance anywhere."

By this time the band had taken their cue from the pianist. Dancing was the order of the night, and the concert bid fair to develop into a full-blown ball. Never before had votaries to Terpsichore kept time to a more inspiring measure ; never had fairer forms languished on happier shoulders,

or brighter eyes shone into deeper and more passionate ones, than on the spur of this improvised round. Fans, flowers, gloves, charms, rings, and handkerchiefs, made the proudest favours ever bestowed at any cotillon. The rooms were one whirl of laughing women and enthusiastic men, and the grave musicale suddenly became a very Babel of voices, each voice seemingly louder, clearer, gayer than its predecessor. The evening finally ended like the breaking-up of a children's party. There were more flights to the terrace, and renewed flights to the supper-room; the sound of rattling Sèvres, tinkling crystal, and trickling magnums. There was such hubbub and unceasing echo of merriment, that the contagion spread up and down, even seemed to break through the flooring of the terrace, and descend to the kitchen on the heads of cook-aids and cooks' devils. The whole house was invaded; footmen were choking with laughter in their white velvet collars; the pages looked like imps of fun in a pantomime; and the staid butler, who had wished his master the same unvarying good-night and good-morning for three decades, wore so dazzling a smile, that when he approached a lamp he seemed to totally extinguish its light.

The Baron was ubiquitous—here, there, everywhere; whilst the various members of his family

seemed social reproductions of himself. The same ease, thoughtfulness, good-humour, and unflagging hospitality were directed towards their brother's guests as if they had been their own; instead of one host there seemed half-a-dozen, all attending to every one's wants at the same time, spurring on the dancers, whipping up the musicians; not alone interesting themselves in withered wallflowers, but even flirting if necessary with maiden ladies of uncertain years and heretofore most uncertain temper. At last the evening came to an end. The Prince had waltzed his last waltz, and a galop that would have resuscitated a dying Taglioni, so there was nothing for it but to say good-night to the hosts, good-night to friends, and good-bye to one of the happiest days in the year; the maddest, merriest day, and one which Flora vowed she would never forget whilst she lived.

The Baron was looking a little paler, a little more tired, and seemed a little more nervous than when his party had begun; but think you any part of his house bore the stamp of an evening's wear and tear? Not a bit of it. The lights gleamed as bright as ever; the flowers bloomed as fair in their magic vases; the rooms were filled with the same mysterious perfume—that subtle odour of feminality; yet there were no morsels of lace petticoats decorating

the carved feet of chairs; no floating ribbons, and no stray flying curls here, there, or in odd corners; there were no crushed exotics on the carpets, and no stemless gardenias trodden into the dining-room's marqueterie. Enilda thought to herself as she bade their friend good-night:

“Has there been a musicale?—has there been a party, a supper, a dance?—or have we dreamed it? Have we heard Patti's siren voice, and the waltz's siren strains?—or have we been asleep in fairy-land, and lived through an Arabian night's entertainment?” Then when the chill morning air blew on her forehead she repeated vaguely to herself:

“Yes; that is it. We have been dreaming under the stars, the dawn has overtaken us, and day-break has come; our fairy companions have fled with the night; and this—this is the awakening; this is morning in London.”

CHAPTER VI.

SEVERAL days after the Baron's party Enilda wrote her father the following:—

“DEAREST PAPA,

“First, a scolding, because you never hardly ever write to me; second, a good, long, loving letter to tell you that you are wrong not to let me hear from you oftener, and to repeat that I miss you more and more, and mo-are, as Charles Thom used to say to Clara Morris in ‘Camille.’ London is such a big place, such a world; there is everybody and everything in it but my own dear papa, whose face is constantly before mine, whose voice I constantly hear, and whose kind care I constantly miss. I wish you'd send for me to come home,—won't you? I dream of you often—so often; and in my dreams you look tired and worried. I am not superstitious, but I wish you'd appear happier when you pay me those

little impromptu nocturnal visits—I wish you would. I have told Charlotte Corday all about them—my dreams, you know—and she rolls her eyes higher than ever and says—can't you just hear her?

“‘Honey chile, who knows?—’specs Massa Rozen’s got things to worry him like, an’ if he don’t jes skip and chip about in dem dar visions, don’t you go for to frettin’; hev a good time while you can, and don’t borry trouble at a dollar a hundred; real worriments come fass ’nuff ’thout scoopin’ ’em up from dreams,’ etc. etc.

“There, isn’t that Charlotte all over? Bless her! But I must tell you she is changed, is grown sad and silent; I’ve given her a new Methodist prayer-book, which scarcely ever leaves her hands. A funny thing happened yesterday. Count de Marcie—for whom, by the way, I cannot overcome my aversion—called, and as there were none of the servants about, she went to the door. The bell had rung so often that in desperation I had started to go myself, so we met in the hall. Charlotte opened the door, and when she saw the Count her face went quite green under her skin; she put her hand to her heart, and nearly had one of those fainting-fits that she had one day in New York. You must remember it. Oh no, you wouldn’t; for she expressly begged me to say nothing to you about it then, but yesterday.

I was really alarmed. However, she wouldn't see a doctor, and I suppose it was just as well, for this morning she seems all right again, good soul! You know, papa, I think she is sicker than we realize, for we shall lose her some day—the dear black link that binds us to the long ago. I must stop this tone or I shall be dropping tears on the paper, and you wouldn't like that, would you?

“Now, ‘just fawncy,’ as they say here, you're deliberately asking me to tell you everything I do in London, every one I see, everywhere I go, every friend I make, every book I read, every—why every dress I wear; and yet they say men are not curious. It comes to this, you love me;—you have no one but me; you miss me, and you want to see me absolutely every minute of the twenty-four hours, just as if I were a little girl once more; just as if I were in—well, in New Ulm; just as if it were five o'clock, and you were coming home, and going to tell me a fairy story, kiss me, give me some candies, and perhaps a new silver dollar, which you would quietly hunt for, find, and lose again, and then pretend that it dropped from the ceiling whilst my head was turned! Oh! I know you, old pater, and I can see through all your dodges just—well, just as easily as I can see myself when I look at myself in the glass. By the way, I do that very often. ‘I'm in beauty,’

as they say in London, and, isn't it funny?—they call me 'The Copper Queen' almost to my very face; they make remarks on my appearance just as if I were a statue; speak of our money and my manners quite as if I were the third person singular, and not myself at all. But I like it; I adore it. I'm getting so vain you wouldn't know me. Ah! before we go any further, am I spending too much money? You don't complain. The bills seem something enormous. I thought New York the dearest city in the world, but London is ahead on the spending question. In America, after all, one spends only dollars; but here it is guineas, right and left; and really a pound isn't a pound, but—five dollars.

“Ah! enough of money—talking shop. You want to know where I have been; well, I will tell you—oh no! I can't now, for some one has just come, and Flora is shrieking up the balusters for me to go down to the drawing-room. I must dress for dinner afterwards; then after that for the Queen's Ball in Buckingham Palace. July 4th, just think of it. I suppose you are in the Quaker City celebrating the great event of—1776. How odd it is—we had utterly forgotten our centenary, and in speaking of it at luncheon to-day an old friend said, '1876—aw, yes—but—but what—aw—has to-day to do with a hundred years ago?' 'Nothing,' said Flora—she's

such a quick creature—‘nothing.’ Then we all laughed.

“Good-bye. Don’t work too hard, and don’t fail to write oftener.

“Always the same, your own,

“ENILDA.”

At ten o’clock Enilda, Flora, and Mrs. Chromo were on their way to Buckingham Palace. They kept up a lively chatter, in which the dress the Princess might wear, and the tea thrown in Boston Harbour so many years back, were discussed in terms of equal enthusiasm. But time has brought about many changes, and one that of a native-born American, spending the evening of the 4th of July, the glorious anniversary day of their independence,—where? At the great Centenary Ball in Philadelphia? Nothing of the sort. At an English Queen’s Ball in an English Palace; if a hundred years has brought about such a thing, what shall we not see in another hundred? A Queen in America, or England a Republic?

Enilda and her friends were asked to dine before the ball to meet the New American Minister, but refused the distinguished honour. They did well: this individual, one of the greatest snobs America has ever produced, was well calculated to give the

British a nice idea of what some American representants are.

But the Ball! Their carriage was so long in the line they thought they never should get in. Before they arrived it began to rain, as it almost always does when one is going to a ball in London, and they were in a fearful fright lest they should get their gowns bespattered; fears, however, were groundless, for they alighted under a covered portico, whence, without fuss or bother, they were ushered in to the ground-floor of the palace.

Somehow there was no excitement such as there is at the White House balls in America; no laughing and talking and chattering amongst a crush of people come prepared to have a good time. The attendant who removed their wraps was unsmiling; and when they reached the foot of the grand staircase Enilda really had a fright. The Yeomen of the Guard, dressed in their quaint Elizabethan costume, standing around, looked as if they had stepped out of some old picture-frame, and reminded her of Madame Tussaud's; she didn't realize they were human beings till one moved. It struck her as incongruous, men and women wearing modern clothes, and the attendants appearing in the costume of three hundred years ago.

Americans ought to have very tender memories

on coming into any English palace; being strangers, and only having guide-books to go by, they scarcely ever think of a present, and only think of it as it recalls a past. Although Buckingham Palace has few historical associations, Enilda had half imagined she should run across King George the Third in one corner, Queen Charlotte in another, or Queen Adelaide in another; yet she found to-day very near, and once having paid a private visit to the palace, instead of a George's Court, saw only the young Queen and her Consort, heard the careless laughter of happy children, and youthful voices echoing and re-echoing through now silent corridors. In one room—one should scarcely speak of it now, except it came so persistently into her mind?—she remembered in this great chamber curtains were drawn, and the light was scarcely ever permitted to enter: that every object was covered with dust, and a long table drawn up near the fireside was left with every article untouched, just as it was when the Prince Consort died! There were the writing-desk and open ink-bottle, the half-used quill, and an arm-chair turned aside from the table, as if its occupier had been looking at a little portrait just to his right: the picture of a fair young woman with bright eyes, rosy lips, attired in a low dress of apple-green trimmed with white lace, the picture, not of a Queen, but of

“his loving wife Victoria”; and, strange it was, that passing through all the other rooms, and even when she came to the beautiful ball-room, this silent deserted chamber kept constantly coming into her mind.

The Court came in punctually at a quarter before eleven:—The Prince and Princess of Wales; Princess Louise with Lord Lorne; the Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, such a sweet-looking woman; the Duke of Teck, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar; and Heaven knows how many others besides. Enilda stood in the diplomatic circle, much to Flora’s and Lucy’s disgust, as they had not, like her, been specially asked and taken there by some Diplomat. The number of the attendants on the Royalties seemed to her very fabulous. The Prince and Princess of Wales, followed by the Court, went to a raised daïs and stood up before a row of gilt chairs; whilst the ladies of the Court ranged themselves around against the wall in a semicircle of courtly effigies. The dancing began immediately after, and such a quadrille was danced! The band were all dressed in red, up in a gallery at one end of the room, facing the Court, and Flora declared they reminded her of the organ-loft in the Union Park Congregational Church in Chicago, and the Oratorio Society getting ready to shout “Hallelujah!” The arrangement of the guests also seemed curious.

The general idea prevails in America that if one goes to a Queen's Ball, one hob-nobs with everybody, even the Royalties; and that every one present is just as good as every one else. On the contrary, the stars of the evening—meaning their Highnesses—are, so to speak, on the platform; to the left is the diplomatic circle; to the right the Big Wigs, Duchesses, etc.; and a line morally drawn from the entrance-door where the Royalties come in, separates these privileged few from every other human being at the ball. Of course the other people really are all herded together; they have no more to do with Royalty than one has with the planet Jupiter; they pack, crane their necks, and stare right and left in vain, for not a hundredth part of the guests get even a glimpse of the Prince and Princess. When they dance it is amongst themselves, and they never go into the Royal circle unless brought there by the Prince or by some Foreign Ambassador; in reality, with the exception of seeing their names printed beside Royalty in the 'Morning Post' on the ensuing day, they might as well have been at a ball at a great brewer's, or any of the other fashionable London entertainers. They indeed have funny ideas of things in America. Now, even Enil-la supposed that Princes and Princesses would be floating about the floor here, there, and everywhere, like the President

and cabinet in Washington, making themselves generally agreeable, but—she was mistaken.

The ball-room had never been more brilliant: it was exquisitely lighted, and presented a scene of bewildering beauty. The dresses and jewels were such, Lucy Chromo said her eyes were blinded only to look upon them. Such orders, decorations, and stars, from St. John to Catherine of Russia, from Persia to Portugal, from the “Garter” to the “Golden Fleece,” and the Annunziata to the Black Eagle of Prussia, and heraldry alone knows what more besides! The prettiest sight was when the dancing began. There was nothing but valse and quadrilles; not as in America,—no polka, no polka-redowa, no schottische, no mazurka, and no Prairie-Queen. The Royalties danced every set; it seemed to Enilda that the Princess never sat down once; whilst she was so tired standing, she thought she should faint before midnight. She could scarcely realize that she was looking upon so many distinguished people, and unconsciously her thoughts flew to the old days, when in America she used to read about lords and ladies, and wondered what they looked like. She had a vague idea that there would be something about them which would distinguish them from other people; but she had found them exactly like other gentlefolk in England, neither

more nor less well-bred, neither handsomer nor homelier; yet, had she told the truth, would have said "they have a little something in their manner which is like the varnish on a picture; it gives it a glaze and helps to preserve, but does not radically change it."

There were numbers of lovely women in the room, the Princess the loveliest of all. Enilda had never before realized what a beauty she was; for in fairness she stands out amongst other women as conspicuous as a white lily in a bunch of buttercups.

She had a fine face, with soft expression and marked aristocratic mien; dark, blue-grey eyes, with arched brows; a low forehead, slightly Grecian nose, small mouth, and a pale complexion, reflecting innumerable lights and shadows. Her figure was not only slight and graceful, but so extremely youthful that it was hard to believe her the mother of big boys and girls; her carriage was so distinctly her own that even with her back towards one, amongst five hundred, one could single her out. She dressed exquisitely. No other woman in England could touch her for the way she puts on her clothes. She wore a black dress with bands of silver looped up with garlands and bouquets of black currants, black corsage trimmed with Spanish fringe, an incomparable tiara of diamonds, and her breast

covered with orders like a statesman. One never tired of looking at her; from the tips of her fingers to the last fold of her tulle robe, her person was interesting. She was very gracious, yet Enilda thought her face sometimes impassive. She knew she was a woman and mother, yet could much easier fancy her a vestal kneeling at some shrine, than rocking babies in her arms, or perhaps playing cat's-cradle to amuse them.

The Princess Louise was the prettiest of the Queen's daughters; fair, with regular features, with blue eyes, and a most winning smile; and Lord Lorne standing beside her looked as happy and contented as a great school-boy.

After the first few dances danced in the royal circle Enilda slipped out with kind Lord Alfred P——, who showed her around and interested her tremendously. Of course he was full of India and the trip, and the Prince's first tiger, which she was disloyal enough to declare she believed had in his homage courted his death. Lord Alfred laughed pleasantly and said, "Little lady, you may rally a Prince, but beware how you libel a tiger." She ran up against Flora and Mrs. Chromo, both looking charmingly; both "their eyes in fine frenzy rolling" because they could not get near the Royal circle.

"It's a delusion and a snare!" said Flora. "I

wouldn't know what the Royalties were like if I hadn't seen their photos in every shop-window in Regent Street."

Flora was hanging on the arm of the Equerry of the Duke of Albany, the Earl of H.'s younger brother. A charming man, such a good fellow, and the best imitator of popular artists in the world; Enilda couldn't look at him without hearing Ristori's fearful throat-rattle as Lady Macbeth, or Frou-Frou's plaintive death-wail, "*une petit—e f-fleur.*" She was dying to hear him then and there, but supposed it wouldn't have been quite the correct thing at a State Ball. However, she whispered what had been in her mind to the young Equerry, who rolled his eyes in holy horror at the very thought. Young Pastor was walking behind Flora, following at her heels like a greyhound. Poor young fellow, he was so much in love! Flora was looking, by the way, wonderfully pretty; and Enilda came very near being jealous of her.

Lucy Chromo had the arm of the Russian Ambassador. He was a distinguished-looking man; tall, broad-chested, straight as a poplar; with very wide-awake eyes, a real Slav look, and a moustache as white as the snow on Mont Blanc. His Excellency was too amusing; he spoke English just as well as most English people; but pretended not to be able

to, and the things English women had taught him to say! Well!—well, a volume would not suffice to put all down. One of his favourite expressions was, “Shut up!” When he first came to London he used to go and sit by the Prince when he was ill with fever; and his delight was to tell every one to “shut up,” from H. R. H. downwards. Taking pattern of English ladies, Enilda had also taught him a few words which he was to use on the first convenient occasion; so he stopped her to repeat them, to see if they were all right.

Lucy Chromo had been and was still talking about the Grand Duke’s diamonds, and the wretched American, Fanny Lear. All admitted that she was wonderfully handsome, but wished—wished she were not a compatriot. As for him, Lucy declared he was secretly married to her, but Enilda would not believe a word of it.

Then they ran up against Florestan with Lady Mildred, who looked very bored. Enilda instantly wondered where Claremont was! She didn’t see him, and thought he was probably talking to some Duchess in the corner. The Duchess of M——perhaps; she knew he admired her greatly. Her Grace had been the theme of European Courts for two decades, and no wonder, for she was still one of the most beautiful women in the world, with a face

and figure that Francis I. might have had reproduced, like that of Diane de Poitiers, for one of the "Three Graces." Her son, Lord M—, had just married a lovely American, with eyes like stars, and hair like Lady Godiva's; and, speaking of that marriage, another Duke's son, who all said was destined to a great future, had also married an American, equally charming, but totally different in appearance; a strange, Juno-like creature, whose deep gray eyes had inky lights in them like quicksilver; she had blue-black hair, and a beautiful face—the very essence of pride and warm blood. Eulda thought at times she looked rather sad, and began, as usual, to wonder, then said to herself,—“No, never mind; at a Court Ball I won't wonder.”

She walked through room after room, but they were all empty, and she was surprised, as out of the thousands composing the upper ten, there did not seem to be more than one thousand present, and that one huddled into the ball-room. The other apartments were beautiful, but had an uninhabited look; a got-up-for-the-occasion sort of air, like the houses smart people hire in London to give balls in. All the chimney-places were filled with banks of exquisite flowers—flowers were here and there on mantelpieces, but they seemed so little alive, that when a lady passed through the room with a bouquet

in her hand, they gave one the idea of being artificial. Indeed, the decorations, floral and otherwise, seemed to vie with the guests in the solemn state and dignity of their deportment.

At half past one the Royalties went out to supper, followed by the diplomatic body, and it was a sight to see the people staring, drawn up in lines on either side, with the same insatiable curiosity as if they had never gazed on Royalty before. As to Enilda, when it got to the supper hour, she was so tired she felt ready to drop. Many other ladies looked worn-out, but the Princess was as fresh as if she had just stepped into the ball. Enilda forgot her fatigue, however, when she caught sight of the glittering tables, and such a service of gold plate as her eyes had never before rested upon; and small wonder either, as it has been gradually accumulating for centuries. She declared the wall looked like a high trellis, studded with gold vines, branches of gold, flowers of gold, leaves of gold, and panels literally encrusted with gold; whilst Flora insisted that she would never be happy till she had eaten an American ice-cream off each separate dish.

The Princess was very gracious, and spoke with them several times. Enilda remarked that one stood very still whilst she was speaking; called her, as well as the other Royal Princesses, "Ma'm" (Madame); and when one came up or went away, dropped a kind

of a cheese-curtsey, called a charity bob, a sort of flap down and spring up like a jack-in-a-box; which Enilda had previously thought very odd, but had been told was necessary.

Finally she danced with the Prince! He was very agreeable, frank, and handsome, and wore a most winning smile, which lit up his face wonderfully. Enilda thought this smile explained his extraordinary success with women; it was really not too much to say, that he was as handsome for a man as his wife was for a woman, and his tact, bonhomie, and consideration for all had justly made him one of the most popular men in Europe. She must also do him the justice to admit it wasn't a bit because he was a Prince, but simply because he was a nice cheery man, as faithful to old caprices as to new, with a chivalrous fidelity which compelled a respect for whomsoever he had honoured or still honours with his special attentions.

Of course Enilda met everybody, and tried her best to recollect what people talked about. After supper the Ball was a little less ceremonious, and she noticed that Miss ——, an old friend, was brought into the circle by H. R. H., and danced twice with him. It is all nonsense about Americans taking up all the Prince's time. If they amuse him, which is more than most people do, it becomes a

question of give and take. The world in general is tired of hearing that the only reason Americans go to any place is because they have money; after seeing all these Peers and Peeresses, and their hereditary rank and precedence, which no amount of wealth could purchase, Enilda came to the conclusion that here there is this distinction and difference—money is a king in every other country, but in England must play second fiddle to birth. And what people talked about? There was such a jumble she had but a confused idea of the whole, only noticed that not one person remembered it was the centenary of America's independence; fifty people, however, spoke of a war being declared between Servia and Turkey, and as Count S. looked very wise, she supposed it meant that Russia would henceforth be on the look-out.

Florestan came up, and as he could not make love to Enilda, thought he would talk politics; however, after a few random speeches, he only remarked, "All Dizzy's sympathies are with Turkey."

Enilda then looked well at the Egyptian Sphinx, whom she saw perfectly well to-night for the first time. She looked many times at his cold, impassive face, and asked herself in vain, "Is this the impersonation as well as the author of 'Contarini Fleming'?—this astute, calculating statesman the

expanded blossom of that impetuous, impassioned youth ? ”

The Premier was speaking very earnestly with a remarkable person, and—on every subject but the one lying nearest the heart. She thought she had never before seen a man such a very quintessence of insolent grace and ease. He half dropped his eyes whilst he was speaking ; his voice was slow and cadenced, he even seemed to smile as he spoke in iambics. She could scan his response to the Russian Ambassador, just then in conversation with him, beginning, “ Ah, Count, you know—the hour is such, etc., etc.”

A brilliant and rising young poet passed and said to him, “ Good evening, sir ; I hope you’re quite well.”

The Sphinx slipped his hand into his breast, reflected for an instant, and then replied, “ I think, sir, we are none of us ever quite well.”

One of the chief topics of discussion seemed to be my Lord Londonderry’s son, who nearly broke his head in the polo match the day before—naturally one of the most interesting of the season, and the squabble about the Marquis de Stacpole’s child, whether it should be brought up a Catholic or no ; the Exhibition at Brussels ; and a necklace which Prince Dhulup Shing had thrown at a Prima Donna in a bouquet which had broken her head open ; the blood

only ceased flowing, and the smile only returned to her lips, when she learned that the hard object which had so injured her was a diamond *rivière* of the purest water.

For the first time in her life Enilda saw the Scotch Reel danced by the Court, to the music of the Queen's and Prince of Wales's pipers—a most maddening affair; it made her think of heather and snowstorms, plaids and philabegs, and a subtle odour of whiskey-punch perfuming the night.

Lord Dudley was present, as amiable as ever, with his young and beautiful wife on his arm. She certainly took the palm as being the fairest of London beauties present. The band was most delicious. Enilda had never heard of Liddell before; and never heard D'Albert's "Sweetheart's Valse" better played. A sudden passage in the flutes caused Lord D—to exclaim to Baron F. de Rothschild, "Dear me, how like Persiani!—she sang with the perfection of a music-box, you know."

The diplomatic circle was unusually brilliant, and Enilda evinced not a little curiosity to know the names "and record" of the various envoys. Count S—— described the men with his usual wit and pungency, and Michelet or Thiers could never have equalled him in facts: he may not have been diplomatic, but he certainly was historic. He was

interrupted by Madame de Florian, who sauntered by on M. d'Harcourt's arm; one could see she was a great favourite, for smiles followed her on every side; she had only just come to London, and found it almost as much of a novelty as did Enilda. She was dressed in a robe of genuine French make, which showed her superb form to perfection, added fairness to her skin, and a deeper violet to her eyes. She even wore jewels whose colour seemed to repeat them in clearness; and Enilda was so puzzled to know what they could be, that she came very near asking the Countess to tell her about them then and there; that, however, would have been difficult, as the dancing was going vigorously on, and every instant an elbow knocked against her shoulder, a patent leather cast a shadow on her train, or the sticks of some vagrant fan threatened to dislocate one of her plumes, which up to the present had remained very upright and stationary in her golden hair.

Just then the new American Minister passed, and Flora nearly went into screams when she remembered and told about a dinner he once gave the British Minister in Washington. There wasn't a plate that had not three Marquis's coronets on it, painted on a shield with more quarterings than the oldest peerage since the Conquest. His Excellency was staggered when he saw the porcelain, and

wondered who had lent it for the occasion ; but he was much more staggered when he was informed that it belonged to his host, and represented the family he pretended to be a member of in England. Perhaps he was ; but considering even a Duke's son bears only a title by courtesy, one wonders what right a hundredth American cousin had to full-fledged coronets.

Lady X—— was pointed out to Enilda, and her hair reminded one of an autumn leaf, brown yesterday, red to-day, and yellow to-morrow ; certainly her locks were warranted to wash and change their colour. Gossip handled the names of well-known people most freely ; one would scarcely write in one's diary one-tenth of the things one heard. All Feminine London declared it to be the smartest ball given at the palace for years—but an end comes to most things, and this Royal entertainment closed only too soon. The court went away before three. There was the same craning of necks and crushing of dresses to look at them ; other's followed, then others, until the ball-room was deserted. Liddell packed away his baton ; only the Yeoman of the Guard still stood at the foot of the grand staircase, and the unsmiling maids held waiting wraps in the ladies cloak-room.

When Enilda reached home she tore open her

letter, described all she had seen, and added this post scriptum :—

“I must say it was the loveliest ball I’ve ever been to. It has just struck me I didn’t dance once with Florestan; in fact, very little with anybody, and I’m so tired I can’t write another word. Five A.M. !—the time I used to get up when I was a little girl, and now just going to bed !

“Dearest papa, don’t say after this that you haven’t at least heard all about the party and everything. Take care of yourself. Write very soon. Accept love from Flora and Mrs. Chromo, regards from everybody, and a fond kiss from

“Your own ENILDA.”

CHAPTER VII.

Two weeks had passed since the ball at Buckingham Palace. Lady Mildred could not disguise to herself the fact that of late her husband had seemed farther and farther away from her each day ; he had never been a passionate lover, and after his return from America she knew that his heart was still more estranged, but as he found her ill, presumably on her death-bed, the change she felt in him was not from his own showing, but her own intuition, which told her that absence had quenched rather than kindled love's flame. However, from the moment of their first meeting until he had put his hand in hers with the vow "till death do us part," his care of her had been unceasing, and his attentions filled with a grave thoughtfulness which had become monotonous in their daily sameness. She had often questioned him of his life in America, but had elicited little from him beyond his trip, his accident, his being

cared for by the Rozen family, and the casual friends he had made in New York. She loved him passionately, devotedly, disinterestedly, but the unvarying excellence of his treatment of and manner towards her, instead of sowing contentment seemed only to sow the seeds of discord. Her life flowed on with such calm, that she began to feel that irritation one feels at sea when in tropical climes day follows day, and week succeeds week, with the same constancy of cloudless sky, dazzling sun, gentle winds, and red gold sunsets. Lady Mildred used to say to herself:

“If he would only be angry with me, would only quarrel now and then; would refuse me when I ask him a favour, or contradict me when I tell him anything! I should think then that he cared something for me; but to see him going on in the same unchanging way makes me feel as if I could throw myself from a window, or jump into the Thames for excitement. His kiss night and morning is always the same; the tone of his voice never alters when he says, “I hope you slept well last night, Mildred; I hope you feel well this morning;” the same courteousness before the world, the same civility but coldness behind it. No; he does not love me; he never loved me; he merely tolerates me; and I am breaking my heart for a man

who will never be any more to me than he is now."

Lady Mildred read Claremont's indifference but too well; he had accepted his destiny blindly, and finding himself hopelessly entangled in the net fate had cast for him, lived on from day to day taking things as they came, trying to forget yesterday, trying to ignore to-morrow. He had never forgiven his wife the way she had won him; he treated her well, because it was as easy to treat her well as badly: he was like the man who said to a friend, "It is utterly immaterial to me whether I live or die;" and in response to the query, "Then why don't you die?" replied, "Because it is immaterial." Claremont's indifference had reached this point when he again met Enilda Rozen; and since her arrival in London he found his life an impossible one. When alone with his wife it was all he could do to retain his impassive calm; before the world the task was less difficult. That dissimulation which we absorb with our mother's milk had become a second nature to him, as it has to all society of men and women. Lady Mildred had made him many unreasonable scenes of jealousy as unwarranted as unreasonable; for since knowing Enilda he had never been sufficiently interested in any one woman, in his attentions to her, to ever exceed the law of accepted common-

place and society civilities. But strange to say, the one woman he had loved, the woman he still adored, was his wife's chosen friend and companion, and the only woman for whom Lady Mildred had never seemed to feel an atom of jealousy.

It was the 21st of July, and Allison House was being made ready for a splendid dinner and ball, the last important entertainment of the year, which Lady Mildred offered in special compliment to "the belle of the season," Enilda Rozen, the "Copper Queen." For days it had been filled with carpenters, florists, upholsterers, and decorators—that galaxy of utilities who have nothing to do with the routine of a well-ordered establishment, yet on occasions of this kind, like the extras in an hotel bill, make a more important item in the end, than the sum-total of the original account. So it was that Allison House, which it had seemed impossible to improve upon before, came forth from these myriad artistic hands so beautified and embellished, as to bear no more resemblance to its former self, than the low-necked ball-room beauty at midnight resembles her twelve o'clock prototype who walked in a tailor-made dress in the Row that same morning.

John Claremont awoke in such a frame of mind as he had not experienced for many a long day. Had he been a working man, despair would have

been a luxury he could ill afford, but the aimlessness of his existence, so to speak, brought with it all that bitterness which comes to those who live without a serious object in life. Had he been obliged to yield obedience to any master-spirit, the material exigencies, the duty he was bound in honour to yield another, would have come between himself and any sentiment emanating from purely personal motives and desires; but although Claremont was his own master, and had lived a life of such absolute selfishness in one sense, there had come, as there always will, a momentary revulsion of feeling, and on this particular day he had awakened with one idea paramount in his mind. He realized that his love for Enilda was no longer a mild sentiment, whose emotions he could check at will, but a dominant passion, which, like the drift of the Alpine avalanche, would sweep everything before it, and he determined on this very day, on this very night, to put her love like his own to the test.

After this decision he felt freer, and had not been in such spirits for a long time. He spent most of the day in his room, putting his papers in order, and preparing for a step whose issue meant the happiness of one as well as wreckage of three lives; he was going to ask Enilda Rozen to run away with him, and did not even calculate the

chance of her refusal. Manlike, it was impossible for him to realize his influence could ever be less over the woman who had once devotedly loved him. It seemed as if the evening would never come; and he finally grew so impatient to see her, to hear her voice, to touch something that belonged to her, that he went to a little box long hidden from view, dragged it to light, and took therefrom some letters which were neither old nor musty, but were sweet, fresh, and dainty-looking, as if they had been written yesterday rather than a year ago. He read them over and over again, then he put them one by one back in the box, until all had been restored to their former position. Suddenly he changed his mind.

"No," he thought, "I shall take one and keep it by me until I see her. I'll take the last." Then he hastily ran them over until he found the one, the last she had ever written him. He had but just taken it away from the others when he heard his wife's voice calling him in the hall. He slipped the letter into his pocket, closed the box, and had barely time to put it out of sight when he heard Lady Mildred again, this time accompanied by a tap on the door, and the sound of the handle being softly turned.

"May I come in?" she said in a cheery tone. "I didn't know you were here, and I'm awfully glad, for

I want to ask your idea about something. You know, John, you have not taken a bit of interest in the house, and it looks so pretty: I've made the old picture-gallery into a sort of conservatory. The way I've arranged, it now has four exits and entrances, but it seems so barren that I want to divide it, and have come to ask your advice about hanging up some tapestry curtains. The workmen say they ought to be one way, I say another, so I thought I'd ask you, and let you settle it. Are you busy?"

"Oh dear no!" he replied cheerfully. "What is it I can do for you?"

She came towards him, but stopped abruptly.

"What a strange perfume there is!" She sniffed the air daintily. "What is it?—something new?—it smells like—"

Claremont flushed deeply.

"Perfume!—I don't know; isn't it the same old thing? White Rose or opoponax?"

"No, no; it's a dead scent, you know, and reminds me of a line of poetry:

"'Oh, the faint sweet smell of that jessamine flower!'

But come along, the men are waiting; there'll be such a crush to-night."

She slipped her arm around his waist, and

together they descended the great oaken staircase; she chattering in the liveliest fashion, he listening with a smile on his lips, but a mind whose thoughts were anywhere but there. They made their way through numerous rooms, wearing so gay an aspect, that even Claremont could not refrain from expressing his admiration; as they neared the old picture-gallery, he even complimented his wife on her taste in the admirable changes she had made. This unwonted kindness so filled her heart with joy that she felt tears rushing into her eyes, and could scarcely keep from throwing her arms round his neck and telling him how much she loved him; but knowing how he detested scenes, she stifled all thought of sentiment, and continued talking of the preparations for the ball as if she had noticed nothing unusual in his speech or tone.

"I really don't know where we'll put all the people," she said. "You won't believe it, but I'm already tired to death; however, Aunt Chandos-Cressy will do the honours in the drawing-room after dinner, and I'll slip away and get a little rest before the ball begins."

"Ah!" thought Claremont, "that is the time I'll ask her to see me—a most opportune moment."

By this time they had reached the gallery. It was no longer a cold, bare place, but had been

transformed from a single room into a labyrinthine apartment divided by screens, hangings, and lofty palms and shrubs; arranging the tapestry-curtains to every one's satisfaction, however, was easier said than done. One way was tried, then another; Lady Mildred suggested, and the workmen explained; but they were readier with their tongues than their hands, and were so clumsy that finally Claremont mounted the ladder and adjusted them himself. When the last touch was added, Lady Mildred cried out with evident satisfaction:

"There, that's just it, John; now let me see," she said, mounting a few steps on the ladder. "All those festoons make the room look like an open rose. Lots of places for flirtations here, eh? Such quiet nooks and corners! I'll get out of your way now. Come down. That's all right," she said to the men, "you can go now. Thanks awfully, John. Now I must run away;" and she moved towards the door. "How hot you look!" she said, casting a backward glance on him.

"Hot! by Jove, I should think I was. As Miss Grayson says, 'I've been working like a nigger.' Are you going now?"

"Yes," she said, calling through the doorway. "I hadn't an idea it was so late. You'll have to take your tea alone, for I'm so fagged;

I'll get a little rest, and have a bath before dinner."

"Instead of my tub," he called after her, "I'm having a Turkish bath up here."

Then he pulled his handkerchief from his pocket, began mopping his brow, and idly took in the result of his late exertions. He was so busily occupied that he did not observe a paper he had taken out with his handkerchief, which had fluttered silently down and settled unperceived at the roots of one of the palm-trees. Without giving another glance around he quitted the apartment. He intended taking a turn before dinner in the Park, but was interrupted by the arrival of an old college friend, whose unexpected visit, although not most opportune, gave him so much pleasure that time fairly flew, and so engrossed were they by reminiscences of the past, that even the dressing-bell rang unheeded. Urging upon his friend to come in good time for the evening, he flew to his room, and in frantic haste began to dress.

Before Lady Mildred went to the drawing-room, womanlike, she bestowed one last look round to see that everything was in proper order. Passing through the rooms she gave a second glance to her improvised conservatory, and felt proud of the skill and taste shown in its arrangement. She was just

saying to herself, "How dodgy it all looks," when she caught sight of a white object gleaming through the shrubs near one of the palms. She hastily picked it up, and saw it was a letter in Enilda Rozen's handwriting, beginning, "Dearest."

She put her hand to her head, and a vague indefinite pain shot through her heart. "What can it be?" she thought; "to whom can it be addressed? But before she could read further, Flora and Mrs. Chromo appeared in the doorway. She hastily thrust the paper into her pocket. They were both talking and praising the beauty of the house, and Flora added :

"As we have remarked in London, everybody arrives from a quarter of an hour to an hour late for dinner. I bet Lucy a dozen of Bertin's best, that if, like good Americans, we strolled in in strict time, not only should we be the first, but not even the hostess would be ready to receive us; and you see how it is."

Lady Mildred smiled good-humouredly, shook hands with them, and making the slightest sort of an apology they proceeded to the drawing-room. In spite of Flora's prediction no one was more than half an hour late, and soon they were all seated at a brilliant table, where Lady Mildred took her place with Florestan at her right. As the dinner was

given to Enilda, Claremont, according to American custom, would have placed her on his right. On the contrary, he was obliged to take in the first lady in rank in the room; but was agreeably surprised to find that Enilda, on the arm of the Count, was happily seated on his immediate left.

Lady Mildred never could tell how she got through the dinner. Long before it finished, her eyes wandered in her husband's direction, and each time he seemed just at that moment to be in earnest conversation with Enilda; even seemed pleading with her for something, for she suddenly lifted her head and answered his question by an affirmative nod. In that last movement a veil seemed suddenly torn from Lady Mildred's eyes.

"I see it all now," she murmured; "his coldness to me, his going off to America; his return and altered manner after having lived in that girl's house are proof enough. How blind I have been!—oh, how blind, how idiotic!"

Her only thought now was to get away from table and read the letter. It seemed as if the courses would never finish; the dessert was endless; but at last she saw her way clear to give the signal for rising. To her surprise Florestan offered his arm.

"It is the American fashion," he explained, half-

apologetically; "I brought you in, and must see you safe out again."

"What!" she said, half-faintly; "you don't want to stop with the men? You don't want to smoke? You—"

"Indeed I do not. I'll take you to the drawing-room."

"Yes," cried Flora; "you'll be the lion in a den of Daniels. We don't want you."

At that moment Miss Chandos-Cressy took her cue from her niece's tired expression and pale face. "I am sure you're tired, Mildred," she said; "you must let me replace you while you take a little rest."

"Why, naturally," cried Flora, Mrs. Chromo, and others in a breath; and the former added, "a day like this is enough to break up a washerwoman."

Lady Mildred murmured her thanks, and said she would retire for a little while. She was burning to read the letter, and scarcely heard Florestan as he said compassionately:

"Do accept my arm. You look so pale; are you ill? Don't mind me. The house is so lovely I shall lose myself in these beautiful rooms, and think I am in Fairyland. Are you sure there is not an Aladdin's lamp concealed somewhere?" Then he kissed Lady Mildred's hand with stately grace as he left her at the door of the drawing-room.


Lady Mildred flew to her own apartments, and with trembling fingers took the letter from her pocket. She turned up the gas, and full under its light, with beating heart and dilated eyes, read it from beginning to end; then it suddenly struck her that she had not once seen her husband's name. Perhaps it was not addressed to him; but, then, how came it into his possession? But had it been in his possession? The events of the day then rapidly passed before her—as in a vision she saw her husband mounting the ladder to arrange the tapestry curtains, and she heard him say, “By Jove, how hot it is!” “That is it,” she said; “he has been shut up in his room all day reading old letters, he put this one in his pocket, and drew it out with his handkerchief when he complained of the heat, and it fell at the foot of the palm-tree. He will look for it first in his coat which he changed for dinner, and not finding it he'll go back to the conservatory to look for it;—he'll go there. Ah, if I only knew when;—perhaps he will go now. What better time than the present? At any rate, I have a clear hour before me; I shall go there myself and hide in a corner, and if he comes in to look for anything I shall then know the letter was addressed to him. First, I must give orders to my maid that I am not to be disturbed.”

In the mean time Florestan wandered from one room to another, until he found himself in the old picture-gallery which Lady Mildred's ingenuity had transformed into so fantastic a creation; he broke a tiny waxen flower from a full-blown tree that stood in a corner, and took the blossom tenderly in his hands.

"It looks like her face," he murmured, "as rare, as fair, as sweet, as daintily cut; what if I should ask her the great question to-night, and—why not in this very room? At least I may imagine she is coming, and sit down in the shadow of this curtain to dream of her. If this flower really were an Aladdin's lamp, and by wishing I could realize all my heart's desires, I should ask for her love and be the happiest man on earth."

Espying a half-rustic divan that might have tempted even an Endymion to repose, he threw himself upon it, the curtain concealed his recumbent form, and he was soon lost in visionary dreams of Enilda.

Lady Mildred having given orders not to be disturbed, had stealthily left her room, and by means of an almost disused passage found herself by one sudden turning, at the further end of the conservatory. She had barely hidden herself when she heard not only approaching footsteps but voices,



and to her surprise her husband came towards her.

Her heart gave a jump, and seemed to leap into her throat, but sure of her hiding-place she stifled her emotions and calmly watched Claremont.

He looked cautiously around. "There's no one here," he said quickly. "Come in; I told you I *must* see you alone."

A smile of triumph lit up Lady Mildred's face as she saw Enilda Rozen come in through the doorway. She was deathly pale, and her eyes burned with a wild light, yet never had she looked so lovely. Her dress of soft crape trailed mysteriously after her, the dimly-lighted conservatory, the flickering shadows from the waving palms and fantastic tapestries seemed to envelop her with a something so unreal, so unearthly, that Lady Mildred wondered if she were really standing before her, or if she herself were not the dupe of her own over-excited imagination. No; it was no deception, no delusion; at that instant Claremont spoke again:

"Can you have been so blind as not to have seen all along how I loved you—how I adored you?"

"Stop," she said faintly, placing her hands before her eyes and walking towards him as one walks in a dream. "I cannot realize that you—you of all the world—are saying this to me. Surely I

have fallen very low in your estimation; you can have very little respect for me after what has passed between us to say again, 'I love you.'"

"Ah!" gasped Lady Mildred, "after what has passed between them. I thought as much. God help me not to betray myself, but to hear them through to the end."

Florestan was awakened from his reverie in a manner he had little imagined. Hearing voices he cautiously lifted his head and was about to reveal himself, when to his horror he saw John Claremont seize Enilda's hand and throw himself on his knees at her feet. To listen was unworthy, to retire was impossible; a thousand thoughts flashed through his mind, the first of which was, "She does not love me," and seemed to place all her indifference and coldness before his eyes in their true meaning. "My heart is broken," he groaned; "at least, whatever I may be compelled to overhear, I will never look upon her face again." Then sinking wearily back on his now disenchanted couch, he buried his face in his hands.

"Enilda," said Claremont, seizing her hands and covering them with passionate kisses, "for God's sake hear me. I swear to you I loved you; I swear to you I never have loved, I never shall love another woman. Fate came between us—a bitter Fate; and yet, so help me heaven, I was innocent."

She tried to disengage her hands.

"Hush!" she said in a breathless voice, "hush! you forget yourself,—you forget me,—you forget your wife. I must not, will not, listen to you,—let me go."

"No; you shall not go till you have heard all I have got to say."

"You are mad, I tell you. Unhand me; I must go. What if we are overheard? Can you realize what you are doing? What if some one were to come in?"

"No one can come in from three entrances at least," he said brutally, "for I have locked the doors. If they come they must face us;—and you, can you deny that you still remember the past?—that you once loved me—that you still love me?"

"The past!" In spite of herself the wild look left her eyes, and a tender flush stole over her face making it soft and roseate, as a cloud that is kissed by the dawn. "The past!" she murmured. "Ah, if I only could forget it!—that I loved you, John Claremont? Yes; that I shall never deny—that I love you still?" She laughed a bitter laugh. "If we are to go by the way of the world, I ought to adore you. You have treated me badly enough;—but who shall say whether I do or do not love? At least you have no right to question me."

"I have a right," he answered, his lips again touching her hand. "A triple right; that of love in the past, of adoration in the present, and devotion for the future. I am yours; you shall do with me as you will."

"And I was once yours, and I gave you my whole heart when you appreciated me, and it is so little that you left me with the words 'For ever' on your lips, and went straight away and married another woman: that, too, without ever even telling me the reason why. You wrote me a letter;—such a letter! I have it still, and whenever I find myself in danger of thinking too much of any man, I read it over."

"Spare me," he murmured; "for God's sake spare me. He alone knows what it cost me to write that letter."

Enilda violently wrenched her hands from his, and uplifting them impressively said:

"And what it cost me to read it! Oh, it was the old story. You gave no reason for changing; you had no need to; you simply preferred another woman to me, and you took a perfectly straightforward way of telling me of it. I can't complain. I never complained. Am I the first woman who has been abandoned by a so-called lover? Was the art of deception invented for you any more than the gift of

credulity was invented for me?—and yet—and yet, you never can know how truly I loved you. This is probably the last time we shall ever meet. I am not so weak as to wish it, nor you so base as to wish to bring it about. I will tell you now, if you care to hear it, how I received your letter. I was so sure that you loved me as I loved you, that I read it through and through before I could realize its meaning, and even then cried to myself, ‘There is some mistake, some fearful dream; it can’t be true; he is only trying me; he wants to see if I love him. He another woman’s husband! No! I cannot believe it, and yet?—how could you jest so cruelly? You wonder if I suffered?—I knew not where to put my head for very shame. My veins ran fire and ice, and my eyes—I could not see out of them; they were bursting—bursting: there were no tears, only thousands of grains of sand cut like needles into the ball’s. I could not cry; even that woman’s resource was denied me; tears used to well up in my heart to flow back again in blood, without once having wet the lids of my poor dazed eyes. Ah, it was because I had tried to see too much. I had strained my eyes to look upon a prospect of happiness that rarely comes to mortals, and like the one who would gaze upon the immortal, my temerity was punished. It seemed so little, the happiness of but two people

in all this great universe—yours and mine! why in all this world of misery could not two poor creatures hope to be exempt from the common lot? Days passed. I tried to think, but could not realize what would become of me; I only used to repeat to myself as each sun rose and set, ‘I shall not see him to-day, nor to-morrow, nor yet the day after. I must wake in the morning, and go to sleep at night;’ always thinking, ‘I love him; he is alive, yet dead to me. I shall never see him again; his words were nothing, only so many lies, and his vows and kisses, lies,—all lies.’ As I took up my life at sunrise my prayer was forgetfulness; at sunset, oblivion. Oh, sir, I was too poor, too weak a creature to have been honoured with so rich a jest;—only a miner’s daughter, and yet you treated me as you might have treated a woman of the world.”

“Enilda, for heaven’s sake spare me.”

“Spare *you*! You had the world to choose from, why not have spared me? One poor creature, whose worst fault was loving you but too well—that was it perhaps. I did not mask my love, I let you see it too plainly; but how could I hide what every one seemed to see? Charlotte—and the gardener, and even that old man Ricard, whenever he looked at me, seemed to know that I was thinking of you. I was so happy; but you—you have never known

what it is to love, or you could never have thrown away such a love as mine! Why, I was yours, body and soul. You became such a part of my daily life, that in every man's face I saw your face; in every voice I heard your voice; in every song of nature I heard the music of my love for you, and your answering love for me; in every book I opened I only read your name; every word I spelled only said, 'He loves me and we will be happy together!' Now that I have everything in the world, I know how little, yet how much I asked of Fate. Then I would have been your slave; you might have beaten, or starved, or kicked me. I would have accepted all for one crumb of love: I would have gone hungry and cold, and have begged in the streets, only to have been always by your side. Before you went away I knew that my father's position was changed, but I said, 'This money which has come at last, which came yesterday, well, it may go to-morrow for all I care; he loves me for what I am, and all I ask is his love.' Then when I realized that your letter was true, my heart was dead, colder, heavier, than any leaded sack which has ever leapt into the sea. Then when I could think—"

"Stop!" he cried. "I can bear no more. Can you pretend that if you loved me as you say you did, such a love can be dead?—that one short year can

have so blotted out a past that not one trace of the old feeling is left? Do you think I, too, can have forgotten it? A fatal chain of circumstances made me a villain in your eyes and my own. You ask me to tell you why; alas! I cannot tell you without betraying a woman, and that woman—”

“Hush!” she said; “her name should be sacred. Do not intrude it in such a scene as this. Now let me go.”

“No; not until you have heard me. Oh, Enilda, what I have suffered since our parting no words can ever tell! I tried to forget you; I tried to accept my fate; to live an honest life, and be if not a loving, at least a faithful, husband to the woman I had married. I had so schooled myself into saying, ‘She is dead to me for ever,’ that even my memories of you became like the flowers we place on the grave of our dead; but when a relentless destiny threw you again in my path, I felt from the first, that my year of agony of patience and of striving had gone for nothing. Do you think in that first sound of your voice, in that first look into your eyes, in that first hand-clasp, I, too, did not live over and over again every moment of our past? Oh, Enilda, do you think forgetfulness is so easily bought? Believe me, love in this world is everything. Don’t be cruel; you still care for me; I throw myself at your feet; let us give up the

world, and live only for each other. We will go back to Laramie, and re-live the old life; to the little lantern-like room overlooking the wide, dear river; and the soft air, perfumed with a thousand happy odours; to hear the murmuring reeds and rushes under the old bridge, and see the moon from her sapphire sea, entangle the weeds and water-lilies in her long silver shafts, magic cypher which only lovers can read. Enilda, will you come? can't you see two figures leaning on a balcony overlooking the river, their lips and eyes meeting, their arms round about each other, their very shadows one, their very sighs breathing a love eternal as eternity. Those two figures, Enilda, are yours and mine; those vows, those kisses, those transports are yours and mine. You were my first love, Fate has again thrown us together, you must be my last."

"No, no; you were faithless; all is changed;—and—and as things are now, I do not regret the past."

"Not regret the past!—and as things are now; what do you mean?"

"I mean," she said, slowly pushing him from her and gazing steadily into his face; "I mean that I no longer love you; that every word we have said to-night is an insult to your wife, although, God knows, I never dreamed when I consented to see

you that we ever should have spoken as we have. It is true I have often feared that some time—some explanation must come between you and me. It has come;—it is passed. Know, John Claremont, that I love your wife dearly; and she—Heaven help her!—she loves you. I shall never willingly see you again, even if by so doing I could buy a perfect future; for I have so suffered myself, that I would never purchase one hour's happiness at the expense of another woman's broken heart. Even were I to love you—which—I do not—I—”

“Speak! You repeat, and to me, that you no longer love me!—that your love, such a love, is dead? No, no; I'll not believe it.” In his anger and unbelief he laughed almost aloud.

“I am to blame for coming;—I have struggled with myself since our meeting on the steamer. I could not analyze my feelings. The sentiment I took for remembrance, was merely the bitterness of a self-love, a self-esteem which had been too cruelly wounded for any true woman easily to forget. I tell you plainly, for the last time, when I heard you say, ‘Let us live for each other,’ I realized then, John Claremont, that I do not love you,—you may believe me or not—I do not love you; I—I love another. Forget me; go back to your wife, and tell her—”

“And tell her,” he interrupted fiercely, “the truth, perhaps?—”

“Which she already knows,” said Lady Mildred, suddenly throwing aside the curtain, and as suddenly revealing herself to their astonished gaze.

Enilda screamed, but did not attempt to move ; the sudden apparition seemed to freeze her into stone.

Florestan, startled by Enilda’s shriek, rushed forward, but either his footfall was so light or their excitement so intense, that none of the three perceived him : Lady Mildred continued,

“My husband could not speak against a woman, but there is no reason why a woman may not speak against herself. My presence here to-night was not undesigned. I found this,”—she held up Enilda’s letter in her trembling fingers;—“I could not help reading it, and I felt that apprehension a woman always feels when on the brink of some calamity. I had a fatal presentiment that all my destiny was written in those lines. Miss Rozen, you wrote that letter to a man whom I tricked into marrying me.”

“Mildred,” began her husband, “for God’s sake—”

“Do not stop me,” she said, looking at him coldly and scornfully ; “Miss Rozen’s frankness at least deserves mine.”

At this point Florestan, in honour, could no longer

conceal himself. He stepped forward. Lady Mildred was the first to perceive him ; she evinced no surprise. Enilda, who seemed still under the influence of some horrid dream, saw him as one sees in a vision, whilst Claremont murmured to himself: "Florestan! He too has heard all;"—and before the former could step forward to demand, or the latter to explain his position, Lady Mildred spoke again :

"It is just that he too should know all; and I repeat, I tricked my husband into marrying me. I feigned an accident which never happened; an illness which fell upon me only in imagination; and a possible death of which I stood in no peril. You will ask why I did all this? It is very simple. I loved him; I felt him drifting each day farther from me, and determined to win him at any cost. I did—at a great one; but I thought once married that my love would beget at least some responsive passion; that when he realized how much I cared for him he would grow to like me. I did not know what had happened, and,—and I never dreamed until—I read this letter, that he had in any way ever bound himself to another."

At that moment the joyous strains of the Blue Danube waltz burst forth. Lady Mildred started, and pressed her hand to her forehead in a dazed manner.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "It is true I have a ball

on to-night. I had quite forgotten; can it be so late? But what have our private feelings to do with the rôle we must play before the world? I am not the only woman who must take a broken heart into the glare of flaring lights, the crush and din of an indifferent throng—" At this juncture Florestan stepped forward.

"Excuse me, Miss Rozen, this house is no longer a place for you; allow me to conduct you to your carriage."

Enilda advanced a step, but was stopped by Lady Mildred's tremulous voice and outstretched hand.

"Miss Rozen," she said, "believe me, whenever or wherever we may meet, I shall cherish for you the warmest feelings of admiration, friendship, and gratitude. You are not to blame for this night's work any more than I, or perhaps even my husband. I see now that no one can escape his destiny. Ah! the music again! I am sure if you have any regard for me, you will not go away now; as the only favour you can ever do me will be to save a scandal here to-night; we must all play our parts a few hours more, we will at least open the ball together, and after that—"

Enilda bowed assent to her ladyship's words, placed an icy hand upon Florestan's, and stepped forward. Lady Mildred made way for them to pass.

“After you,” she said, smiling curiously; then turned to her husband with the same strange look.

“Mr. Claremont, perhaps for the last time—your arm?”

CHAPTER VIII.

ALTHOUGH the excitement of this eventful evening had been enough to upset the strongest-minded person, Enilda, who had heretofore betrayed but little of the heroic in her nature, on this occasion proved that she was made of the stuff that models heroes, not cowards. The revulsion of her own feelings on listening to Claremont's outburst, the final letting go of that cable which up to an hour ago had anchored the present to the past, the shock of Lady Mildred's appearance and Florestan's discovery of her long-hidden secret, were such vivid realities, that like the brightest flash of lightning, before she had completely realized their portent, they had as completely ceased to be. An hour ago might have been yesterday—or dead with seven thousand years.

She never knew how she left the ball-room nor how she reached home: as she re-entered her house she was met at the door by Charlotte Corday,

whose face expressed the liveliest anxiety and concern. She began talking at once, expressing her surprise at Miss 'Nilda's getting home so much earlier than usual.

"A messenger has been twice to seek you," she said; "he left a note and 'claired it was a matter of life and death; but you look pale, honey chile."

"Yes, I feel faint, Charlotte; get me a glass of wine; and what about a letter?"

"Take off your things first," she urged, but this Enilda declined to do, and sinking into a chair hastily opened the envelope. As she read a cry escaped her. The letter was as follows:

"You are a woman, Enilda Rozen, and I know, although you can't have any love for me, you won't refuse to go to any one in trouble, certainly not to a compatriot who is ill—perhaps dying—in a strange land. For Heaven's sake come to me as soon as you get this. I have a terrible story to tell you. Come alone; or, if you will, bring a servant with you, but neither Flora nor Mrs. Chromo; some way I could not bear to see them; but you—you've always heaped coals of fire on my head, and I turn to you as the only woman in whom I can confide. Lose no time, for my strength is fast leaving me.

"IDA FORRESTER."

Enilda read and re-read the letter. At first she thought it a trick, but at last was convinced of its sincerity. Charlotte returned with the wine, which she swallowed at a draught, and then announced that she was going out that very moment, and bade her put on her things to accompany her. On their way to Foresti's house she explained as much as she knew, and for the first time noticed that the negress's face wore a strange look. She eagerly questioned her, but Charlotte responded only vaguely until so pressed by Enilda that she said :

"Yes; something has happened, Miss 'Nilda dear. Have patience; you can't know no more to-night. It consarns all on us; but good news 'll keep, and bad comes fast enough. Wild horses won't fotch nothin' more from me now, so just simmer down, and in good time you'll know all about it."

Enilda was so wrapped up in thoughts of Ida Forrester, and speculations as to the nature of the confidences she was about to hear, that she did not insist upon Charlotte's explaining further. They threaded their way through dismal streets; for although it was barely midnight the great city wore a strangely deserted aspect, and the occasional lamps were about as sufficient to light up London, as a single signal to light up the Atlantic. A light vapour streamed up from the earth; it was neither

fog nor mist, but that indescribable blueish atmosphere common to London between the hours of twelve and two: which thickens and renders indistinct street corners, and makes the various houses in their facings of brown or white or grey, stand forth in the haze like spectres haunting a death-strewn battle-field.

At last they reached Foresti's house, one of those prolific mansions redolent of lodgings, in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury Square. The house was very dimly lighted from the front, but from the windows of the second story a steady light seemed to indicate the sick woman's room. In a few moments Enilda and Charlotte were admitted to a lofty chamber, where on a bed in the corner of the room lay the poor opera-singer. The pillow was scarcely whiter than her cheek; and her long black hair seemed to curl in endless serpentine rings on the pillow; her eyes burned with a strange brightness; and her lips, from which every vestige of colour had fled, twitched nervously, keeping company with her hands, which incessantly plucked at the coverlet: this was elaborately trimmed with lace, and to Enilda's surprise a large coronet and monogram were conspicuous in the centre. A night-lamp was on a table beside the bed, and standing beside this table, in a respectful attitude, was Fraulein Marx, the lady

companion. Enilda bowed civilly to her, and went straight to Ida; she took one hand in hers, kissed her cheek, and said tenderly :

“You were right to send for me; I am more grieved than I can tell to find you in this state.”

Ida attempted to speak, but no words came; tears only rolled from her large black eyes and sank silently into the frills of her night-dress.

“Don’t try to speak now,” said Enilda. “I shall not leave you; I only want to know how to help you, to befriend you if you need a friend.”

Ida murmured a few words about forgiveness—about the past and the old school in Chicago;—then Enilda began to take off her things, and when she had removed her last wrap, sank down by the bedside and caressingly took Ida’s hands.

“You must not worry or fret, dear; perhaps things are not so bad as you think. You are with friends, and you must not tell me anything now, because you’re ill, that—that you might be sorry for afterwards; I mean when you get well, you know, things may seem different.”

Ida shook her head wearily, and made an effort to rise from her pillow. Both Enilda and Fraulein sprang forward to help her; but assuming a strange energy she waved the latter from her with a gesture of such horror and loathing that Enilda raised her

eyes in wonder. The movement lent the same energy to her voice, for she almost screamed as she said :

“Don’t let her touch me, don’t let her come near me, she is the bane of my life ; I look upon her as the cause of all my misfortunes. Don’t stop me now, Enilda ; while I have the strength, I must tell you everything.”

At this moment Fraulein Marx came close to the bedside.

“Miss Rozen,” she said, “I beg you will pay no attention to her ravings, she is utterly mad. She has had a fever, which has left her in such a state of mind that she is not responsible for her words. She has quarrelled with me, with her best friend ; she has got hold of a letter which I held in my possession, addressed not to me but to some one else ; she read it, and her imagination has run away with her to such an extent she almost calls white black.”

Enilda looked up coldly. Charlotte, who had been sitting in a distant corner of the room, drew her chair nearer to the bedside.

“I scarce know what to believe,” said Enilda haughtily ; “your words are strong enough, Fraulein, and yet, I’m sure Ida knows perfectly what she is saying.”

“That I do,” said the sick woman, quickly. “I’ve

sent for you because I want you to help me. It's no use, Fraulein Marx, you saying I am mad, and trying to shut me up. I haven't a friend in the world, Enilda, and I'll tell you everything."

Ida then began with a voice which was fairly strong at first, but dropped steadily lower as she proceeded with her story. She went back to the time she first came to Europe to study, told of her trials and hardships, the dog's life she had to lead on the stage, and the people she had to cringe and make up to, from a parson to a penny-a-liner: she said when she knew there was no *couleur de rose* about the stage, she still loved it; its fascination was so much more than its degradation, that she had never regretted the career she had chosen. At last she spoke of Ems. "You won't believe it, Enilda," she continued in a sobbing voice; "but I was so alone, so friendless, that I did as many another woman has done before me."

Enilda pressed her hand softly. "Don't go on, dear," she said, "it will tire you too much. I know what you are going to say."

"It isn't as bad as that, Enilda,—only perhaps it is, for it has turned out the same. I met him, and finally consented to a secret marriage."

Enilda drew away her hand, then instinctively

put it back again. "And so you are married," she said softly. "Go on."

"Ah! married—yes; but can't you understand, it was all a wretched farce? I used to beg him to acknowledge me, to give me my proper position before the world as his wife. He never would. I can't say that he ill-treated me, but of late he had changed so much that I felt he no longer loved me. His ways became more and more mysterious, until finally the other day he brutally told me never again to speak of his acknowledging my marriage, and in spite of my tears abandoned me when I was wretchedly ill in New York. But that's not all. Oh! Enilda, I'm not his wife at all; he's married to another woman, and Fraulein Marx knows all about it, for I've found some letters in her possession, written by my husband years ago, and addressed, 'My dearest wife.'"

Enilda started up. "Great Heaven! can it be possible? The wretch! to so ruin and betray a helpless girl!—but are you sure,—quite sure? This is a dreadful charge to bring against any man. Is this true?" And she turned abruptly to Fraulein Marx.

The Fraulein's face was impassive. "I told you she was raving," she replied; "but what if I were to say, Yes, it is true?"

At this Ida broke into frantic sobbing. She

turned her head on her pillow, and wept so bitterly that for a few moments Enilda was afraid she would do herself some harm.

"It is too late now," she murmured; "but it is so hard to have misspent my life, to die when I am so young, just when I thought I had a bright future spreading out before me. The Fraulein says I have killed myself, because I took on so when I realized the awful truth: I broke a blood-vessel at the same time I broke my heart. What have I to live for? He can't marry me now, and I am disgraced for ever."

"There you're wrong," said Enilda. "You have everything to live for, above all to punish the man who has so betrayed you, and to prove to the world that your misfortune was not your fault."

Fraulein Marx stood still impassive by the bedside, but Charlotte Corday's head was bowed upon her bosom, and stifled sobs shook her old withered form. Ida was calmer, and her head was half-lying on Enilda's bosom, when the door suddenly opened, and a man entered the apartment. Enilda looked up. "What does this intrusion mean?" she cried,— "what—?" But the words died on her lips as she recognized in the intruder the Count de Marcie and D'Orbach.

"You!" she cried, her arm still supporting Ida's

head. "Can anything have happened,—Flora! Mrs. Chromo! Lady Mildred?"

He stepped forward gallantly with hat in hand. A light half-opened summer overcoat disclosed the irreproachable dress-suit, and still more faultless gardenia which adorned his button-hole. He bowed with pantomimic assurance, and in the most casual manner in the world came towards the bed whereon Ida was lying. Enilda flushed and half-aroze; his manner was in itself an offence.

He made her no answer.

"You do not speak," she cried; "what means your appearance at this hour, in this place?"

At this point Ida raised her head, and pointing a finger, slowly murmured,

"It is but natural, a husband may seek his wife at any hour; but he—he is no more my husband than I am—"

"What do you mean?" cried Enilda. "Ida, speak! It can't be true;—this—this then is the wretch who betrayed you?"

The Count stopped short in the middle of the room; his face wore an expression of mingled rage and astonishment. He swore a vile oath, then rushing forward, seized Ida by the hand.

"What do you mean?" he cried. "Haven't I been tormented enough of late, without the addition

of your infernal whining and nonsense? So you've told her! A pretty mess, truly—and you think I will forgive such a breach of faith as that? No—never; and if you were to get well to-morrow, and I were a thousand times free, I wouldn't marry you."

Fraulein Marx came forward and pulled him away from Ida by main force.

"Are you drunk or crazy!" she cried. "Be careful, be careful; another syllable may be too much."

Shocked and disgusted, Enilda prepared to leave the room; but Ida implored her not to go away. The Count, evidently under the influence of liquor, turned to the sick woman with such brutality of gesture and manner that she felt her very soul sicken as she gazed upon him, and before she knew how it came about, she had thrust him from the bedside and stood between him and the girl he had so foully wronged.

"Ha, Miss Rozen!" he laughed; "'The Copper Queen,'—perhaps some day we will not give ourselves such airs."

"Sir," cried Enilda, "leave the room this instant, your very presence is an insult to an honest woman; as far as I am concerned, never dare to speak to or address me again. Know that I shall have this matter thoroughly sifted; the world shall hear of your vileness. Ida henceforth is under my pro-

tection;—no—perhaps I am too harsh; I do not think you are yourself now, but if you are a gentleman and have one spark of honour left tell me the truth: Is or is she not your wife?”

“I am as sick of subterfuge as she is,” he replied angrily. “My wife! No;—and never was.”

Whilst he was speaking no one had noticed Charlotte Corday, who had gradually drawn near, and was staring at him with wild dilated eyes; her face wore the same livid look Enilda had twice seen upon it, and suddenly she began to speak: her voice sounded hoarse and unnatural whilst she cried:

“Come home, honey chile, come home; don’t go for to mixin’ yer self up in odder folkes affairs.”

The Count turned towards her with a hard laugh, which rang out awfully in the hushed room.

“That’s right, Auntie, take her home,” he said; “there are some people whose affairs she had best let alone—I am one of those people.”

“I shall never let you alone,” cried Enilda, “until I see justice done. I will tell the world—”

“No, no, honey chile, come home,” pleaded old Charlotte.

“Ida,” asked Enilda, “what do you wish?—shall I go or stay?”

Fraulein Marx answered for the singer.

"I think, Miss Rozen," she said civilly, "that you had best go; the doctor ordered quiet. This scene is enough to make even a well woman ill. Trust me: I am her friend, although she doesn't know it, and refuses to believe it."

"Enilda," said a faint voice.

In an instant she flew to the bedside.

"Ida dear, what is it?" she cried, throwing her arm tenderly around her. "Do you wish me to go now? Tell the truth; I'll come to you again in the morning, but not if he is here. Think well before you send me away. Can I trust you alone with—with them?"

"Put your ear down close to mine," said Ida softly. "Go now, dear, it's better so; and remember that whatever happens I've told you the truth. I've been vain and foolish, but not wicked. I thought I should be a royal countess, and now—and now;—kiss me just once, Enilda; I've never been worthy of you, of your friendship, but I ask it for—for to-night anyway. I can't thank you enough for coming; God won't overlook your goodness to me."

Enilda felt the tears coming; she struggled vainly, but they would fall. She signed to Charlotte to fetch her wraps, and giving Ida one more kiss, one more hand-press, turned to leave the room.

The Count mockingly stood aside to let her pass, whilst Fraulein Marx had resumed her old position at the little table.

This scion of a royal race bowed his Versailles bow as Enilda reached the doorway. His heartlessness and whole manner were so loathsome that she could not forbear turning back once more.

“Do not think, sir,” she said, “that this night shall ever be forgotten. To you at least I and mine say good-bye for ever.”

“You think so; alas, I fear that this is not a case of what woman wills, etc.; for I, on the contrary, have already forgotten your words, your very presence here this evening; as my friend Isabella—I beg her pardon, Her Majesty—said when she left Spain, ‘I distinctly do not say good-bye for ever; but—au revoir.’”

As soon as Enilda reached home Charlotte Corday put a little paper in her hands. It was a telegram.

“Ye muss jess read dat, honey chile; for now’s the time, and bear up under it. Massa Rozen needs us; he sent it to me.”

“My God!” interrupted Enilda, “what has happened?—surely misfortunes never come singly.” She snatched the paper and read:

"Tell Enilda that I am ruined—disgraced; break it to her; take the next steamer home without fail if you still love me.

"ERIC ROZEN."

Enilda folded the missive in her fingers.

"Is that all, Charlotte? I—I thought he was dead. Ruined!—what is that to me? Money never brought us any happiness. Disgraced?—that he could never be in my eyes. Oh Charlotte, let us leave London at once and go to him; let us go to-morrow morning. I am ill, miserable, unhappy; everything has gone wrong;—oh, let us go away!"

Enilda fell rather than flung herself on to the negress's broad bosom.

"Honey chile, don't take on like dot; haint ye got me and yer fadder en yer frens all jess de same? Chair up, en we'll be off quicker'n a possum ud skip a gum-stump; but Miss Flora, en—en Miss Lucy how 'bout dem?"

"'Bout dem," said a voice at the door. "They're here to speak for themselves." Flora appeared. "Enilda, what on earth happened at the ball, you disappeared so early? Lady Mildred said you had a bad headache and might be lying down; then when you didn't turn up at the last we grew anxious, and she explained calmly that she feared you had re-

turned home;—said it in the coolest way I ever saw. You know when you come down to it and want to know anything from an Englishwoman she doesn't want you to find out, you might as well question the rock of Gibraltar. Of course we stayed to the end, and I may say I never spent a more gorgeous evening. I have more cotillon trinkets than—why, what's the matter?"

Flora stopped as suddenly as she had begun. In a few moments she would have been told all, but Charlotte peremptorily stopped Enilda's talking.

"Read this, Miss Flora," she said, handing her the cablegram. "Read dot, case you 're a frend." Then she whispered to Enilda and forbade her speaking then of Ida. "I hev reasons, honey chile, wich I'll gub yer later on—trust old Charlotte, she knows best." She was interrupted by Flora:

"Well, I s'pose we'll chip off to-morrow. I say we, for you don't imagine I'll let you go alone, do you, Enilda? Not I, although I hav'n't seen the Tower, or the Crown Jewels, or the Church where there is a tablet to Lady Jane Grey, or the field of the forty footsteps. Thank Heaven, I have done Madame Toussaud's, otherwise I could not leave London. Enilda, cheer up. What's a failure in America?—only one more stepping-stone to success. Pa's the only man who's never failed,

because he never amounted to anything more than respectable citizenship, and he always had a blind sort of luck which even helped him on in that. Ruin ! disgrace !—nonsense ; the words ought to be struck out of the American vocabulary.”

Flora chattered on ; kissed and caressed Enilda until the latter even smiled.

“ Lucy’s in bed,” she added, “ and I wouldn’t be here, but I was *so* hungry ; give me a dinner and ball the same night for pure starvation diet ; so hungry, as I say, that I was on my way to the kitchen to see what I could devour. Come along, let’s interview the pantry, and we can pack up after I’ve had some food, which, by the way, dearest, you look as if you stood mildly in need of. It’s broad daylight.” She went to the window and lifted a curtain. “ Look at this ; I believe I’ve struck the first sunrise which has occurred to my knowledge since I left dear New York. This early dawn is the explanation of England’s power. She not alone lets in daylight on her own affairs, but has enough and to spare to see through the affairs of the whole civilized world.”

She continued chattering, and finally dragged both Enilda and Charlotte to the dining-room, whence the latter was sent on an exploring tour to the larder.

Flora danced around in glee, and fairly screamed

with joy when Charlotte reappeared with ample edibles. She seized a chicken-wing. "Look at me now, ball dress and all; oh! shades of—

‘Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred.’

Enilda, why don't you laugh?—this is such a lark, and what have you done to Florestan?—he looked like a ghost at the ball,—what?"

Then Enilda sobbed aloud, and stretched out her hand warningly. The remembrance of that evening passed over her: it was too bitter. She started to tell Flora all, but broke down crying,

"Oh, Flora, can't you understand? I—I like him, and he is lost to me for ever."

CHAPTER IX.

LUCY CHROMO awakened abruptly, was aghast when informed that Enilda and Flora were on their way that very moment to America. Enilda showed her father's cable, and Lucy's good heart instantly pleaded Mr. Rozen's cause. Nothing had been said of Ida except that she was very ill, and Enilda begged Lucy to look after her. She did not explain what had taken place the night before for two reasons—one her fine sense of honour, which could not betray Ida even to such friends as Flora and Lucy; and the other an indescribable feeling that all was not yet known, a vague sense of walking in the dark, of being on the edge of a precipice where a false step at any moment might launch her into eternity. She was too troubled, too dazed, to fully appreciate Charlotte Corday's zeal in begging her not to interfere with the Count's or any one's affairs. She never questioned the good soul, but went about making preparations for her immediate departure, as

one goes about in a dream. Even the memory of the night before was intangible, and only as they were starting off and a certain letter was placed in her hands, did she realize all that had taken place. The letter was from Florestan. He wrote :

“I know you will believe me when I tell you that my presence in the conservatory was one of those purely fatal accidents which no human power has ever yet been able to avert. I went there to dream of you, the only woman I have ever loved. I intended on that very night to ask you, for the last time, to share my fate—to be my wife. How did my dream end? Great Heaven! was ever such an awakening? I say no more. A vague idea had often haunted me, the idea that perhaps you had at some time of your life loved or cared for another; but I never speculated upon it; I never encouraged it to come back; your past was as sacred to me as your present is, as your future shall be. I still love you, but we shall not meet again, not now, unless destiny throws me once more in your path. I am leaving London, I don't even know where I am going, but you shall hear from me some time when I can command my feelings. You ask me perhaps why I am going? Oh! Enilda, can't you see that I have no more hope? I heard you say, ‘I love another,’

and I am not such a fool as not to realize all your indifference has meant, how little you care for me, and how really slight a place I have in your heart. No, no, I can't hope any longer, and as I cherish your good-will I don't want to bother you, and shall never tell you again that I love you. Only know that I am your friend, yours till death; wherever I may be you have only to call and I shall answer. The world is not wide enough to separate us; I am taking myself out of your sight for a time, because I think that you do not care even to see me. My presence might stir up sad memories: not bitter ones to you, dear; you are not to blame; you have nothing to blame yourself with. You but followed your inclination, and that was so like all your sex. The crown of true womanhood is when the heart speaks, and you—when have you ever been aught that was not most woman?—when shall you ever be anything else in my eyes? Forgive my love for you, forgive my bluntness, my stupidity, my persistence, my persecution. All is over now, and in the reverential kiss I place upon the hand I once proudly hoped to call my own, receive the assurance of my undying regard, and believe that whatever may happen to you and yours, myself and all I possess are ever at your service. Farewell!

“YTHAN FLORESTAN.”

They had barely arrived in Liverpool when a telegram from Lucy Chromo announced Ida's death. Enilda then told Flora as much as she dared, and although her own heart was filled with trouble it still held a tear of regret for the unfortunate young woman—alone, betrayed, almost friendless, dead in a foreign land, cut down in the midst of youth's priceless hopes and priceless illusions. It seemed cruel, even wicked, but Enilda scarcely thought of other than her own trouble; misfortune makes us all more or less selfish.

The early train had come in, but just before the sailing of the 'Arragona.' They had neither berths nor tickets; but the purser was found, and promised to do the best he could for them; and Enilda fancied there was something of pity in his manner as he reassured her that he would do all in his power to make her comfortable. A large room was found at the last moment, an ex-pantry made for cabin accommodation when the steamer was overcrowded. The first night Flora's maid and Charlotte Corday passed on the cushions of the ladies' cabin, whilst two strangers, bound only to Queenstown, shared the room assigned to Enilda and Flora. They had fondly hoped that chance would leave them to themselves; but the next day, when they were well out of Queenstown, this

illusion was promptly dispelled, as the purser showed a lady into the cabin, briefly announcing that she was the occupant of No. 3 berth; and half-an-hour later the door opened and another woman stood on the threshold. As she hesitated for some moments, and seemed scarcely to know whether to go or stay, Enilda civilly invited her to come in. She took a step forward, saying apologetically as she did so :

“ I don’t know why I’m here ; I’m an intermediate ! ”

Enilda looked surprised, but replied :

“ An intermediate ! Are you not a first-class passenger ? ”

“ Not a bit of it ; but the purser said I was to come here, and here I am. I hope I’m not disturbing of yer ? ”

“ I don’t understand,” said Enilda ; “ perhaps you do belong here. How much did you pay for your ticket ? ”

The intruder mentioned a sum about one-third of what Enilda had paid, which left no doubt as to the position she would occupy in the steamer ; but having been sent there by the purser, she was as much entitled to her berth as Enilda herself. Considering the stranger was a very portly female, Enilda adjudged it prudent to resign the lower berth to her, and take the upper one opposite Flora’s,

besides she was nearer to the port-hole, and she specially disliked any one over her head. Flora was disgusted when she learned they were to be four in a room, but Enilda was too thankful to get home at any cost to complain of either ship-companions or ship-quarters. She and Flora were both deathly sea-sick, and as usual with human beings in this state, wished for only one of two things—either that they would get better, or that the ship would go to the bottom. The Intermediate happily did not suffer from this almost universal ocean complaint, but the fourth occupier of the state room, after vacillating for two days between the saloon and the ladies' cabin, finally yielded to the inevitable and held constant possession of her berth, thus adding to Enilda's and Flora's annoyance by preventing the small consolation that they might have found in talking things over confidentially.

The weather became fearful, although in the month of July. There was incessant rain, and when the clouds lifted they only seemed to gather themselves together but to break again, to be followed by violent gusts of wind and tempest. The ship rocked, plunged fearfully forward, or again danced on the wave with the lightness of a cockle-shell. In the mean time Enilda and Flora became not only on speaking, but on very friendly, terms with their room-

mates, and the Intermediate, though not sea-sick, found herself obliged to obey orders and keep in her cabin. No one had thought of danger, but one could not help a certain disagreeable feeling when told that the weather-needle marked a gale, and the steerage were already battened down under their hatches. As soon as the idea of danger came uppermost, as usual all sea-sickness vanished. Flora even got about, and as far as the saloon, when a sight met her gaze which sent a cold shudder all over her. Every breakable object was shivered to atoms; the floor and lounges were covered with wreckage of every sort, from a biscuit-dish to a table-rack; and she seemed wading through piles of broken crockery. The room was almost in pitch darkness; and added to the terrible roar of the waves, was the dire rattle of swinging brackets and such stationary objects as still held fast, but which threatened every moment to wrench themselves from their fastenings and complete the work of general destruction. A skylight in the ceiling was broken, and the tables were covered with a light powder of pulverized glass, every now and then quantities of salt water poured in, drenching everything and enveloping the room in a cloud of spray, not unlike the steam of a vapour-bath. Flora did not stand, but—rolled aghast. Only one human being was in sight—a steward,—who, in spite

of a certain experience of gales, evidently had all he could do to keep his balance. Suddenly there was a terrible suction sound, as if the ship were being irresistibly drawn into some narrow compressed space, followed by a roar passing all description, and a sudden darkness fell upon them.

"Heavens," cried Flora, "we are lost; what's that?"

The steward smiled glumly. "Only shipping a rover, Miss," he said, and he clutched a near side-board as he continued his rocking.

"Is it dangerous?"

"I never saw it when it was, which means that when it is dangerous people don't live to tell the tale."

Flora heard no more, but with one awful shriek turned to make her way back to the state room. Her terror was so great that she almost walked straight, she finally pitched headlong into her room, just as there was another frightful suction sound; but again the darkness lifted, and the gallant ship leaped forth from the caverns of the deep. Flora began excitedly to tell all she had seen, and described the saloon in such terms that Enilda almost laughed at her description.

"Hear it!" she cried; "just listen to the smashing! You see they had the tables just set for dinner;

I don't believe there's another dish left aboard. This last little act is what they call shipping a rover. I suppose that's the way the 'City of Boston' disappeared."

Flora clambered into her berth with the utmost difficulty, chatting volubly all the while; she was as comfortably settled as could be, when she made the discovery that water was pouring into the state room, and was already two inches deep upon the floor. In vain she rang the bell for the stewardess; the water kept coming in faster and faster, until finally the cabin trunks, the handbags and articles of wearing apparel deposited in the corner were positively floating about like rafts; to add to their consternation the same terrible suction sound was heard again, and the same ominous blackness obscured the room; the suspense was horrible; scarcely a moment had passed, yet it seemed ages.

"Ladies," said Flora with solemnity, "we've shipped another rover, and as we don't come out of it, I guess this time it's dangerous. I don't want to frighten you, but if I'm not mistaken we stand a show of passing in our cheques this very minute."

At that moment a howl louder than the howl of wind or wave burst from the lower berth, and the Intermediate sprang from her bed: with the words, "I think it's toime some one was a prayin'," she

flung herself on her knees in the middle of the floor, her skirts flapping and splashing in the water about her, and wildly clasping her hands above her dishevelled hair, the darkness lifting but slightly in the mean while, cried :

“Oh, fathyer beyant, I’m prayin’ now for miny raisons, thankin’ ye for all favers, and requestin’ that this noight may turn out only as ye wish. I’m one of twelve more or less dead and gone. I left ould Ireland young, but I’ve niver forgotten it, nor the ould mither as brought me into this world of sin ; and although I’m a poor woman and cud ill afford it, I tuk one trip and left mee husband as is a foirst-class liquor dayler in New York, to go to the ould farm and save me mither from want. And, oh Lord, lay it to my favour, take it into account that I’ve settled upon the ould woman farty pounds a year, which God knows I could ill spare, and which if I’m saved this night I’ll make forty pounds more, as sure as me name’s Bridget Finnerty. Forty pounds”—then the voice was lost in violent sobs, while Flora, raising herself in her berth, screamed out at full pitch of her voice :

“Bridget, Bridget, get off your knees, turn round and look at me this very minute. Don’t you know me ? I’m Flora Grayson ; I thought your face was familiar, but I couldn’t place it.”

Mrs. Grayson's former cook—for it was none other—heard the voice, and made an effort to get up; but she only managed to half-raise herself, and clinging on to the valise, turned a startled face towards Flora. By this time the darkness was completely lifted, but the storm raged on, accompanied by such a torrent of words from Bridget that a stranger assisting at the scene might easily have feared himself in Pandemonium. The generous woman who had innocently requested of Omnipotence that the footstep of the Mighty Destroyer might be stayed in virtue of the modest settlement of forty pounds which she had bestowed on her mother's declining years, with the addition of another forty in case she were saved, at last managed to struggle to her feet, and with somewhat the security of a weather-vane in a gale, she clutched the foot of Flora's berth, and began pouring forth the history of her life since the Chicago fire: she went on with such joy and exuberance that Enilda and the fourth occupant of the cabin, Miss Walsh, nearly choked in their efforts to subdue their laughter.

As there is only a step from the sublime to the ridiculous, Bridget's impromptu prayer had absolutely annulled the possible horrors of their situation. There are some people with so keen a sense of humour that, if the occasion presents itself,


they must laugh, even with death staring them in the face; not alone Flora and Enilda but evidently Miss Walsh belonged to that category, for from the moment Bridget began her petition until the storm abated in its violence, all thought of danger seemed to have passed; even Enilda's grave mental pre-occupation had to give way before the combined chatter of three such room-mates as Flora, Bridget, and Miss Walsh.

They had been out six days, and head winds having stopped, considering the weather, they were making fairly good time. Enilda and Flora had both been able to get up, but Bridget steadily declined to leave her cabin.

Miss Walsh although still ill had aired most of her family history, as well as received sundry visits from her aunt and uncle, whom, she informed Enilda, occupied the bridal chamber on board the steamer. Enilda listened to her talk without either interest or indifference, for as they drew nearer New York she gradually realized the difference between her starting away two months before and her present almost ignominious return. The excitement of the last day in London and her enthusiastic love for her father had almost blinded her to the real meaning of his cable, and she began now vaguely to wonder what his words meant—what she was coming

home to. Of Florestan she could not think without commingled feelings of humiliation, pain, and love, and when she remembered the conversation between herself and her former lover which he had overheard, she thought she must die for very shame. She did not for a moment think the change in her position would make any change in him; even had she not received his letter, she knew but too well the truth and loyalty of his nature, still on this last day, as they were nearing the shores of Staten Island, her heart was filled with very bitter memories. She had lost him for ever, and all through her own fault. She could now look back upon her conduct with that unflinching microscopic gaze, which a hopeless present always flashes upon the past. She saw every act, every word recorded in letters of fire, and felt that while she had blindly followed her destiny, at the same time her own self-love was the immediate cause of the ruin she had sown about her. "He will despise me," she murmured; "and I merit it. We will probably go away from New York for ever, but some day I shall write and tell him how I cherish his friendship and goodwill. I shall always love him, but he shall never know it."

She was thinking all this over as she dressed herself to go on deck for the first and last time during the voyage; they were veering straight



for the horse-shoe point of water which separates Long Island from Staten Island, and makes the port of New York second in beauty only to Naples or Constantinople. The sun was setting in gorgeous points of brilliant colour which seemed to light up every individual tree, shrub, and flower gleaming from the banks of these water worlds. As Enilda went out Flora came in, and Miss Walsh said to her briefly:

“Is there land in sight?”

“Yes,” said Flora cheerfully. “Do you want a look at your native clime?”

“No,” she replied; then there was a pause. “Are there any ships in sight?”

“Not many. What do you ask for? Do you mean to say this is your first coming home, and you don’t want to look out on the island?”

At this juncture Bridget, who had been asleep in her berth, suddenly awoke, and stared sleepily out.

“No; the truth is,” said Miss Walsh, “I hope there are not many ships near, for I want to throw all my soiled linen overboard.”

“What!” said Flora, thinking she had not heard aright.

Miss Walsh repeated her remark, adding: “You see it costs so much carrying baggage around on

the Continent, and we've been travelling for five months, over Italy, France, and Belgium, so aunt and I got in the habit of wearing our clothes—well, a sufficient length of time, then throwing them away when too dirty, and buying new ones in the next town we came to. It was the easiest and cheapest in the end. Most people, I hear, give their ship-things to the stewardess; but I think I'd rather throw mine overboard. Don't you understand?"

"No," said Flora hotly; "I don't understand. If that is the style of Americans you know, I hope they'd never speak to me in Broadway, for they'd be cut dead as sure as my name is Flora Grayson."

It was Miss Walsh's turn to stare.

"Heavens and earth!" said Bridget, rolling her eyes and clasping her hands. "I'm only a poor woman, and I've settled forty pounds a year on my mother, that I can ill-afford, not to mention another forty already promised, but I'd be ashamed to live like that. Thank heaven, I have mee own clothes, mee own shimmees, and mee own pocket-handkerchiefs with mee own initials B. F. marked clear and strong on aich corner."

Miss Walsh, like the soldier in the Light Brigade, felt that "some one had blundered." Flora and Bridget began their packing, utterly ignoring the economical American. Bridget did not spare her.

She fondly overhauled the various under-garments comprising her luggage, and gazing lovingly on the fated B. F. in the corner, chirped out in tones loud enough to reach the ears of at least one Transatlantic traveller :

“I’m no millionaire ; I’ve not seen Holland, or Belgium, or Italy. I don’t have bridal chambers on steamers, and couriers travelling first-class, but I cling to mee own linen, and mee own initials B. F., as fondly as the wife of a first-class New York liquor merchant ought to do.”

Night fell and the ship got in sight of New York, but too late to go over the bar ; the tired passengers had the prospect of spending another twelve hours on the steamer, as no one could go ashore until the next morning. Some hours previous there had been the usual excitement of taking the pilot aboard. He was an extraordinary individual, wearing a tall hat, frock-coat, spotted neck-tie, and kid gloves of the most approved cut ; his smile was equally fashionable, and an enormous cigar tightly wedged between his lips seemed stuck so fast that it would never come out.

To everybody’s surprise, and to many passengers’ disgust, he could bring no news from New York, having been out himself fifteen days, even his small stock of newspapers and necessities having been

washed overboard the very day of his starting. In consequence those New World fanatics, who had been obliged to give their minds and bodies ten days absolute rest, who had been beyond the hourly persecution of telegrams, letters, messenger-boys, telephones, and newspapers, and to whom this enforced repose, however beneficial after two or three days, seemed a waste of valuable time, found themselves obliged to submit to twelve more hours of rest before hurling themselves into the whirlpool of agitation called life in New York.

After the latest table d'hôte, Flora declared she was sleepy, and the night being very fine Enilda decided to take a walk with Charlotte on the hurricane-deck. The saloon was filled with a happy crowd of people. Whist, poker, and euchre parties occupied every available place; in passing the smoking-room, men's voices in animated discussion rang out on the night, and the combined odours of vesuvians and delicate Havanas made the air more redolent of the billiard-room than of the sea.

Enilda stopped involuntarily; she could never smell tobacco-smoke without seeing before her a lawn, a fair man stretched idly on the grass, and a hundred idle cigarette-rings circling as idly in the summer air. What!—would she never be able to get away from the past?—a past which was now

mocking and loathsome. She longed to do something desperate—to scream, to stretch out her arms, to jump from some great height, or indulge in some violent physical action which would burst the band she had for the last few days felt tightening round her heart. She longed to be alone; even the laboured breathing of the old negress was irritating and painful; so she placed her in a sheltered seat to leeward, and began a brisk rapid march up and down the lonely deck. She was quite alone. In the distance she could see the Captain on the bridge, and farther on, the shadow of the officer told off for the watch of four bells. The night was so peaceful, so calm, so lovely. She leaned over the taffrail, and with hands idly clasped, looked not shore-ward, but sea-ward. The sky was already seeded with stars, and the mingled expanse of broad firmament and great waste of water, seemed in the distance to blend together in one great, one infinite realm: beyond whose confines alone the weary mortal could ever hope for peace. Then she looked again towards the land, and saw the shores of two islands, whose lights glimmering here and there seemed to stretch forth glittering arms to clasp a semicircle of as glittering a sea, and still farther beyond the sky was coloured with that mysterious reflection which streams heavenward from the myriad lights of a

great city. Enilda was still lost in thought when she heard a man's measured footsteps pacing wearily up and down. The steps drew nearer, then receded, but continued backwards and forwards, up and down, with the same methodical lassitude.

"Ah," she thought, "some one who like myself longed to get away from the heat and glare and fulsome chatter of the saloon. His step is slow, perhaps he too has brought a breaking heart out to commune with the stars, the silence, and the wonder of this beautiful night." Suddenly the footsteps paused; she heard a smothered exclamation. In spite of herself she turned hastily around, but recoiled with a scream, for a man stood before her, gazing at her with a look of bewildered and supreme astonishment.

"Mr. Florestan!" she gasped. "You here!" She raised both her hands, and placed them before her face, as if to shut out the shame which she felt must cover it. He too stepped forward and placed one hand on the railing as if to steady himself, the other he stretched towards her.

"Enilda," he said, in a voice which trembled with emotion; "Enilda, God knows this meeting was not of my seeking. Can it mean, dear, that fate has wished once more to throw us together? Can it mean that destiny has at last taken in her hands

those links which are to bind my life to yours? Listen to me. I left London intending to go abroad, when a longing came over me to see my mother, the house where I was born, and the child who was the means of bringing you into my life. I came aboard at Queenstown, and induced the Captain to give me his upper deck cabin. I have never spoken to a soul, I have lived with the sunshine and shadow, storm and tempest; my only companions my hopeless thoughts of you. I said to myself, 'This is the last night on board; for the last time I shall feed my soul with thoughts of her love. In each bright star I shall read the brightness of a dream for ever past; but from this night forth, I shall put her out of my life.' Why has fate thrown you once more in my path? Why?"

"Why," she repeated; "don't you know? Can't you guess?" Then she withdrew her hands from her face, and coming slowly towards him placed them both on his still outstretched palms. This time it was his turn to recoil.

"Stop," he said faintly; "I could not bear to be deceived again; tell me quickly what you mean; did I not hear you say, 'I love another?'"

She gazed straight into his eyes with a look he had never before seen in hers.

"And you did not guess!—you did not realize

when I said I loved another, who that other was ?”

“Be careful, Enilda, you don’t know what you are saying.”

Then she came closer to him. “Ythan, dear,” she said, in a low voice, “when I read your letter I intended to write and tell you the truth ; all the past, all my blindness, all my awakening ; and how without knowing it my heart had gone out to you ; but all is changed now ;—not that I love you less, but our positions have changed. Before I received your letter a cable from my father told me he was ruined—perhaps disgraced. Ruin means loss of money. I would not insult you by supposing that that could make any difference to you ; but the other word”—she shuddered—“disgrace ! that is another thing.”

Then for the first time since they had known each other, Florestan spoke to her as a true man speaks to the woman he loves.

“God has been too good to me ; your sorrows are mine, and if there be any joy, please Him we shall share it together ; if there be aught else, my name shall protect you and yours before the world.”

* * * * *

Early the next morning they went ashore. Flora was so upset by the news of Enilda’s reconciliation

with Florestan that she scarcely knew whether she was on her head or on her heels. There was the usual bustle of looking after luggage, the nuisance of the Custom House officers, and the final landing on the crowded wharf. Enilda in her precipitation had entirely forgotten to warn her father of her arrival, but a carriage was soon found, and she and Flora with their maids and luggage were packed off to their respective destinations. The carriage was stopped at the last moment by Bridget, who gave Flora her address, and begged her not to forget that her husband sold the best Kentucky Bourbon to be found north of Mason and Dixon's line.

Florestan was looking after the last of his luggage, when he was slapped on the shoulder and confronted by none other than Arundel—the same old Arundel, but younger, happier, and more elegant than the former ever imagined it possible he could appear.

“My dear Florestan,” he cried, almost flinging himself into his arms, “I had no idea you were coming; I came here with a friend who expected relatives to arrive by this steamer; but you don't congratulate me,—you have not heard the news? Why, it's victory, my friend, victory.”

Florestan stared.

“What,” continued Arundel; “you haven't seen the telegrams or the papers or heard anything?

Stand aside, there's such a crush, I don't want people to look at me. You see I'm a sort of hero; my picture has been in all the illustrated papers, even in the 'Police Gazette.' I'm a rich man now, worth millions;—we've won. You remember the trunk, the letters, and the papers? Well, the trial came on again; Rozen came up as a witness. That last day when I looked at him, something in his appearance, his manner, voice—I don't know what—the man himself,—but I had a sudden inspiration—it came over me like a flash, and while he was giving his evidence, I stood up in the court and screamed with all my might and main, 'That's him; I know him; he can't deceive me any more; that's the man himself.' Then I rushed up and denounced him then and there. I and Parkins quietly drew forth a letter from Rozen speaking about copper-mines, etc. The Court compared that one with those I had, and—the handwriting was identical. I must say he was game. He was terribly startled at first, then he just threw back his head, while a strange smile ran over his face; he put his hand to his lips, twirled his moustache and said, more calmly than I'm talking to you now, 'Well, and if I am, what are you going to do about it?' Of course that was the end. The letters I had, completely criminated him, and the judge settled in my favour in less than ten minutes. Not

only was I his partner in the copper business, but everything he had gone into *from that day we first met and made our agreement*. I was to share equally in every affair, profit and loss, until the time I instituted the suit against him, which was just five years ago. Of course Rozen repudiated everything; the whole of the world is talking about it; even your name is mixed up in the affair; and—the papers are something to read. He was game, that I'll say for him; but think of him being the man himself all the time!"

"The man himself," echoed Florestan; "he—who—what do you mean?"

"He—who—what?" mimicked Arundel, fairly jumping around in his excitement. "Can't you unders'tand? Why, it was a put-up job, the biggest swindle ever known; they are one and the same person, don't you see?—the silent partner all bosh—there wasn't any; Rozen was Vane and—Vane is Rozen."

"What do you mean?" Florestan stood back and stared in helpless amazement.

"What do I mean?—and you helped me to do it. What do you mean?—what I've said is clear enough."

"Go!" said Florestan, "and never let me look upon your face again; through you I've spent the best years of my life to ruin the father of the one woman in the world I love."

CHAPTER X.

ERIC ROZEN had played his best trump and failed. From that moment in the crowded court-room, when Arundel had stripped the mask from his face, and the mask from his life, his one idea had been revenge; revenge not on the man he had betrayed, but on the man who had so insulted his self-love five years before, by giving all the money he had won from him to the Children's Hospital in San Francisco. He cared nothing for the loss of fortune, nothing for the disgrace, he only faltered when he thought of Enilda, and how he had made himself a criminal for her sake; but even his great love and the humiliation that unsuccessful iniquity brings were nothing to the vengeful torrent that now overwhelmed him. He determined to hunt his enemy down, as he himself had been hunted down.

The meeting with Enilda had been one brief hurried interview. When she arrived home she

found him so busily occupied in his study that he did not even hear her open the door. When she rushed forward and threw her arms around him, he broke down for the first time since that awful day, his head fell on her shoulder, and he could only gasp:

“Oh! Enilda, I am unworthy of any honest person’s thoughts. You—of course you know all?—you have read the papers?”

“I know nothing but what you cabled me. I have read no papers; I want to read none. Nothing, dear, can change you in my eyes; don’t fret over the loss of money; we were poor once and—and honest. We must take up our lives in the old way. There is still the cottage at Laramie—”

He sprang from her with a cry that she could never forget.

“Don’t ever speak of Laramie,” he said; “it was there I met my ruin. Laramie was destined to be fatal to both of us. No, no, Enilda, we—we will think of some future, but—but not yet. I can’t scheme very far ahead; besides, there is this house to get rid of. Most of the servants are gone; they were too good to stop on with a criminal.”

“Papa, hush! never that word to me. I don’t know what you have done, but had you committed murder you are still my own darling father. I shall

cling to you in the face of everything and everybody."

Then she stopped as she thought—everybody! Everybody? there was one—what would he say? She was about to tell her father all, but hesitated, as once before in her lifetime she had hesitated. "Not now," she thought; "now I cannot tell him that any one else is in my mind, that any one else shares my heart or hopes,"—so it was that a second time she kept silence. She determined to send an immediate line to Florestan, begging him to say nothing for the present of their changed position, but was so fearful he might call, or write to her father, that she hastily excused herself and ran off to her room to write the letter. Five minutes later a messenger was carrying a note to Florestan, containing the following:

"MY LOVE,

"I find him changed—old, sorrowful, ill. I don't know what has happened. I have heard of men failing before now, but did not dream that any one could be so affected merely by the loss of money. Can't you understand that this is not the moment to speak to him of our love—perhaps we may later, when his business affairs are settled, we may then, but not now. I have said nothing, and if you care for me you will respect my wishes, and keep absolute

silence. Do not come and see me yet. I will write soon. Kiss darling Cyril for me, and accept for yourself

“All my fondest thoughts,
“ENILDA.”

When Florestan heard all that had happened, when he realized the innocent although fatal part he had played, he was as nearly distracted as a man can be. He refused to see Arundel—in fact everybody. He shut himself up to think; to think how he could help the man he had unconsciously betrayed. He could not reason and say that in unmasking a villain he had done service to the world at large, for like the world at large, Ythan Florestan allowed his sympathies to relegate his moral belief. As we all refuse to recognize the shortcomings of those whom we find personally agreeable or useful, and find ample excuse for not only the faults the world lends them, but the faults they really possess, so Florestan found a million excuses for Rozen, and looked upon him as a man who although once even antipathetic, was no longer a malefactor, but an unfortunate man, and above all the father of the woman he loved.

After hours of communing, he decided to make over the major portion of his fortune to repair the

decision of the Court, and wrote to Rozen appointing an interview. He hoped to make Rozen accept this money, and also to make him realize that all he had done in the disastrous affair was not from personal motive, but merely to help a man whom fate had sent to his door, and who, by the most inhuman persistence, had succeeded in interesting him in a tale which for strangeness and intricacy he had never before heard equalled. He knew it would be no easy task to convince a man whom he had almost openly insulted five years before that he had been innocent of any wish to work against him, but he determined at least to make the attempt. He could not yet realize what Enilda would say when she learned the part he had played? Would she not despise him, and likewise refuse to believe that he had been an innocent worker in the affair?

“I will go away,” he cried, “and not see her face again. If she ever forgive me, if she ever send for me to come back, but—no, that will be impossible. In ruining him the blow has fallen heaviest on her, as usual, on the innocent. I dare not tell Rozen that I love her. He would see in my effort at reparation a motive that does not exist. He would think I offered him money to buy his daughter; and she—God help me, she, after all, might think me base enough to buy her at any price.”

His meditations were interrupted by the arrival of her letter. He almost screamed for joy when he read it. Unconsciously she had left him free to act; free for a little while to collect his thoughts—to prepare for his interview with Rozen. He argued that if one man took him by the hand another would follow, and things might not seem so bad, time and proper influence would bridge over a scandal at present open and gaping like a fresh sabre-cut. As to remembering it—why, the world moves on so fast that yesterday's horrors fade with yesterday. No one in America has time to think of anything but the present. To-day is dying—to-morrow not yet born. Florestan knew what his influence could be, what his personal support could be worth to any man in a difficult position, and did not underrate the good he hoped to do. If only Rozen would prove tractable!

Whilst he was turning these things over in his mind for the hundredth time, Eric Rozen sat alone in his study. His dark eyes were filled with an unwonted fire, his face was stamped with a sinister smile, and his firmly set jaw never once relaxed its rigidity. He had written several letters, and was writing another when Arnold brought him a note. He read it hastily, and as Florestan had cried aloud after learning the contents of Enilda's

letter, so her father cried aloud when he learned the contents of this.

"Fate has arranged it for me," he thought; and he read:

"I beg you will come and meet me, as I have something to propose to you which no one but ourselves must hear. God knows I was innocent of any wish to hurt you; He made me a blind instrument in the hands of another. I do not expect you to believe my words, but let me prove them to you. Meet me to-night in West Central Park, between seven and eight, near the clump of beeches at the open space just back of the little hill. We cannot, must not, be seen talking at either your house or mine. I depend upon your secrecy. I beg you will come for—for your daughter's sake, if not for your own. Believe me I would lay down my life for you at any time. My grief for the rôle I have played in this terrible case never can have words. Perhaps some day you will feel that I am your friend. I have named the hour, seven to eight; at that time there's not a soul in the Park, and we can be free to have a long talk. Don't fail me.

"Yours,

"YTHAN FLORESTAN."

As Rozen read, the light in his eyes deepened, the smile on his face grew even more sinister, and his jaw, if possible, clapped more firmly together. "I sha'n't fail you," he muttered; "have no fear of that." Then he denied himself even to Enilda, had some slight refreshment brought to his room, and went on with his interminable writing until the clock struck six. After that he arose, went to another table, and took from the drawer two pistols—seven-shooters. These he loaded, primed, and placed in his pocket, then he dressed himself as if for a journey.

He went to his desk, and taking up a little picture of Enilda as a child, looked long and earnestly at every feature, at the luminous eyes, and smiling mouth, at the slim hands, the quaintly-dressed hair, and the little old-fashioned dress; then with it still in his hand, he went towards the wall, whence a maiden in the first flush of womanhood smiled down upon him. Rich robes covered the lovely form; flowers bloomed on neck and bosom; the hair was caught back in a newer fashion from the fair forehead, but the face was the same, the eyes were the same, the expression the same—it was his own little Enilda, who looked lovingly at him from the old picture, whose earnest gaze followed him everywhere from the new. He bestowed one more tender unfathom-

able glance, then a sudden film came before his vision.

“Good-bye,” he said tenderly; “good-bye,” and he kissed the lips of the miniature. “I ask pardon of this Enilda, of the little girl I held on my knee, of the little child who used to read to me from her primer, of the little girl who loved her father and knew him when—he was an honest man. Good-bye, dear, and when he is gone try and think of him as he was then;—not—not as the world knows him now.”

Then he falteringly placed the little picture back on his desk, gave one last look around, and prepared to leave the chamber.

A knock came at that moment, and Charlotte Corday’s voice was heard outside.

“Massa Rozen, massa Eric, may I come in?” she said.

He started. “Poor Charlotte!” he muttered. “Yes; why not?—she’s a faithful creature.” Then he opened the door; she came in and closed it quickly behind her.

“This letter was brought, massa, a moment since, addressed to me, shut up in another, and I was to give it to you immediately. There’s no answer.” Then she smiled on him, pushed it into his face, and was about to retire. He called her back

as he opened his letter, and started as he saw its contents.

"I might have known he'd turn up; it comes at a wrong moment, I've no time for him," he thought; then he turned to the old negress with a look of kindness on his face which even she had never seen.

"Charlotte," he said, "I'm going out for a little while; I sha'n't see Enilda before I go; I don't like to disturb her. I—I've been thinking of you to-day. You've served me and mine long and faithfully, and I want you to promise if anything ever happens, you—you will never desert her while life lasts."

"Oh, Massa Rozen, what do you mean? What's going to happen? You ain't nothin' like your ole self. I'll call her now."

"No, no," he interrupted, "I'm all right, I only need a little air. I'm going for a walk."

"But you'll be in for dinner, massa?"

"Dinner!"—he smiled strangely. "Oh yes, I'll be in then, or at any rate before it's over, that's all. Good-bye;—I mean, you may go."

Charlotte could only obey. She withdrew silently, but with a presentiment of evil, went to her room and dressed herself, descended and prepared to follow her master as soon as he should leave the house. She did not need to read the newspapers or to be told that some calamity had overtaken the house, for

since that night when she had been an unwilling listener in her master's apartment, she had lived in daily, hourly expectancy of a storm which should burst and engulf them all in ruin.

Rozen read his letter, which was a single sheet of paper wrapped round the half of a blank visiting-card torn irregularly in the middle. On the paper was written :

"I must see you at once. As you come out of your house a man will walk up to you carelessly, will not recognize you, but will give you the corresponding half of the enclosed card. Follow him ; I shall arrive at the rendezvous as near as possible at a quarter to seven ; don't fail me. The man after indicating to you the place of meeting will leave you. And as soon as he is out of sight I will appear."

Rozen with an oath crushed the letter in his hand.

"What ! he has been my ruin body and soul, and hasn't done with me yet ! The worst is known, and as to other transactions he doesn't know it, but he's out of them altogether." Then he held the bit of paste-board disdainfully up in his fingers. "His old trick, his old signal,—well ! so be it. I'll see him to-night, but I'll send him off in short order, and if he wants another meeting, I'm not sure that it wouldn't be as

well to give it to him after I have seen Mr. Florestan. Why not?" He put the letter in one pocket and the bit of pasteboard in his watch-pocket, and this time prepared to go out, but he went back again to take Florestan's letter, which he had left on his desk.

When he reached the door he stopped yet again on the threshold.

"Good-bye," he said softly, looking at the little picture. "When I am gone the world will soon forget what a villain your father was."

He closed the door and in another moment was in the street; he did not see a dark shadow which kept him closely in view and followed him stealthily step by step, and had reached the corner of the street farthest from his house when a man brushed by him, held something up between his fingers, then passed on before him. Rozen nodded involuntarily, seized the bit of torn card and followed him. The man, after many circuitous windings in and out, to Rozen's surprise led the way into Seventh Avenue; he scarcely noticed his conductor was taking the road to the Park, but followed him mechanically. He was filled with such dark, desperate, and reckless thoughts that he scarcely realized what he was bent on doing. He was a godless man, and had little fear of death; and yet he could not think without a shudder that perhaps this was his last night on

earth; he vaguely remembered the time, not long since—when he was honest; perhaps more honest than many another; but now he was tired of life, of these five long years of deceit, lying, and villainy. He loved his daughter so well that he had committed crime for her sake. He said to himself, “What is this old man’s money? He’s a drivelling fool; he’ll be in his grave shortly, and no one will ever be the wiser. Many a man has done worse than I, and has never been found out. What are the successful men of to-day—if you look into their intimate records—other than thieves, liars, and swindlers? Every railway stock, every mining stock, every new bubble blown on the market, is inflated with the cries of widows and orphans, of starving men, women, and children. The crime to-day is not the being a villain—but in being found out.”

Then he quickened his pace, but stopped suddenly, for his guide indicated a rustic bench half hidden between low branching trees, and a mask of shrubbery as wild and uncultivated as any virgin forest in the heart of the Great West.

Rozen sank into the seat and smiled bitterly as he reflected that at that very moment, perhaps not a hundred yards away, fashionable New York was driving up and down the stately avenues of her beautiful promenade; for Central Park is as dis-

tinctly American in its civilization as any of the New World's cities, betraying on one hand a perfected cultivation which would not disgrace the famous Bois de Boulogne, and on the other a savage luxuriance of primitive uncouthness. Not a person was in sight, and the only sounds heard were the falling of some leaflet, and the rustling of a gentle breeze through the dense foliage; the incessant call of birds' voices, with the occasional refrain of a mocking-bird, who had brought its notes and song from some magnolia vale of the distant South. The air was perfumed with the indescribable fragrance of ripe summer, but the softness of the scene had little effect on Rozen's remorseless mood. He started once as he heard a carriage roll by evidently very near; he suddenly recollected that the "*jeunesse stage-dorée*" of New York were in the habit of driving out to dine at High Bridge, a *châlet* restaurant on the Hudson some distance beyond the Park, and to various similar places of resort dotted here and there about the environs of Gotham. He knew he was safe from observation; and was calculating on the improbability of being disturbed by any one coming that way without a purpose, when he heard a hasty footstep and the Count stood before him.

"Ah well, here you are," he said with a smile.

"Thanks for being prompt." He held out his hand.

Rozen got up and his face wore a very black look ; he drew back as he saw the Count's outstretched palm.

"Never again," said he. "I may be fallen very low, but I'm too good ever to touch the hand of such a blackguard as you are ; and you may as well know first as last that I've done with you for ever. Be brief—my time is short. What do you want with me ?"

"Ah ! not shake hands with me ? As you will. That's scarcely a welcome to a pal who has come straight from the steamer, and hasn't even had time to change his travelling-suit. This is one of your 'high falutin'' days, Rozen. I hope you don't object to my smoking ? I'm dying for a cigar."

"Say what you have to say, and be brief. You have no more claim on me ; and now that everything is over, what more can you expect from me ? I didn't think it even worth while to mention your collaboration, your name at the trial."

"There was good enough reason for that," interrupted the Count. "What was the use of dragging in a person who has been so useful to you in the past, and who, if not necessary to you in the present, certainly will be so in the immediate future ?"

Rozen laughed scornfully. "You are only right in one thing: there is no past, no future for me; the present is now, and I don't need you."

"What were your reasons then for not speaking of me at the trial?"

"Very simple. I considered you beneath my notice. My own position was bad enough; there'll be enough obloquy attached to my name, and I didn't care when you are found out—as you will be sooner or later—to have had the honour of a long acquaintance with you, added to the number of my crimes—"

"Take care," interrupted the Count. "Don't try me too far." Then he blew some rings of smoke into the air, and with his slender bamboo cane began writing the initials of his name in the gravel at his feet. "Don't talk nonsense!" he went on. "What's a failure? What's this infernal law-suit any way?—the fat's in the fire now, but I've thought of a plan by which you can not only recoup yourself and get even with everybody, but revenge yourself on two persons, one that hound Florestan—"

"Ah!" gasped Rozen, suddenly remembering his appointment to meet the latter. It was drawing near the hour. "I've no time to hear any of your plans," he said brutally. "If you wish a future partner, that partner will not be me. You certainly

ought to be thankful enough to get off free yourself not to bear me any ill-will for thus abruptly terminating our heretofore close relationship. You must have money enough by this time to keep you from want, and you certainly have ingenuity enough if not to suggest new and lucrative fields of adventure, at least to return to your old livelihood, surely, Black Bill—”

The Count dug his cane more deeply into the gravel, destroying the symmetry of his name which he was writing in elegant scrip, then he jumped up as suddenly.

“Don’t push me too far, Rozen, and don’t speak that name here. You are not in a mood for joking? Well, neither am I. You want me to be brief; you ask me what I want. Well, I’ll tell you; I want two hundred thousand dollars, and I want it to-night, and you—you’re going to give it to me.”

He did not even wait for an answer to his words, but for the first time during the interview began pacing up and down, and switching his stick right and left at the trees and shrubs bordering the path. He was so excited and Rozen so pre-occupied that neither heard a hurried whispering and half-indistinct rumour of footsteps evidently in their immediate vicinity.

Rozen laughed a short hard laugh and also got

up. He mechanically shook down and settled his trousers as a man always does after having been seated for five minutes or fifty; then he spoke hotly, harshly, scathingly, and to the point.

“What do you take me for? Two hundred thousand dollars!—why, I wouldn’t give you two hundred thousand cents to save you from hell. Henceforth you go your way and I go mine; besides, you’ve no right to ask me for money; I’ve more than fulfilled my contract with you. Where would I get such a sum to give you?—you forget you’re speaking to a ruined man.”

“But those other transactions—the bonds, the mortgages on the new Leadville mines, the shares in that Pittsburgh coal company, all started this last year, they are worth—”

“The paper they are printed on—nothing more; and if they were you have nothing to do with them. Know for the last time, that if I had fifty millions I’d see you dead at my feet, I’d see you rotting before I’d give you a cent.”

The Count stopped his restless walk and adopted another tone; this time his was the humble pleading voice.

“You are not right!” he said. “Were we not partners in everything? Was not I the sole and unique means of your making such a fortune? Didn’t

I suggest to you months ago what was coming; and even offer to get that devil Florestan out of your road? You helped me at a desperate time, and I come now to help you to suggest a plan; but not until you've helped me first, and you must help me because I'm in danger; that fiend Ricard and a woman you know a little about have determined to ruin me. You'll say, 'What's that to me?' Nothing; except that if I'm done for I can't be of any more help to you. You can't get two hundred thousand?—well, one hundred thousand then;—that I must have or, by G—d!"—and he stepped threateningly in front of Rozen—"I'll know the reason why."

"Stand aside!" said Rozen hoarsely. "I want to pick no quarrel with you;—you forget I'm a beggar—a disgraced and ruined man; you at least are free. Stand aside and let me pass. I wish you no harm; you've been the bane of my life, but we meet to-night for the last time. Will you let me pass? I have other work on hand: we are quits."

"Are those your final words?"

"Yes!—No! I say once more, hope for no money from me—"

But the words died in his throat, for the Count sprang at him, seized both wrists in a vice, and before he could even cry for help whipped out a

bowie-knife and planted it to the hilt in Rozen's body. The latter gave one scream, and divining the Count's movement, the instant his hand was free, seized one of his pistols and fired blindly at the murderer.

At that instant the bushes parted back of them, and Florestan and Charlotte Corday, with loud cries for help, rushed into the pathway; the former pinioned the Count's arms from behind, and threw him violently to the ground. Meanwhile the victim, half-leaning against the bench, with a steady hand withdrew the knife from his wound, but at the same moment with a faint cry sank to earth.

"Charlotte—Enilda!" he gasped; "this is my death-blow."

In an instant the path was filled with men, attracted by the noise of the shot and cries for help. A policeman dashed through the covert, but before the Count's illustrious person could be secured other officers arrived upon the scene, and Florestan was soon relieved of his painful position.

The next thought was for the victim. His head was on Charlotte's bosom. The ground was dabbled, a pool lay beside the bench, and Charlotte's hand and handkerchief, with which she had vainly attempted to staunch the wound, were reeking with blood. The officers explained to Charlotte that

Rozen must be carried to the nearest house, and a shutter fetched from a neighbouring *châlet* was already at hand, whilst a messenger despatched by Florestan's thoughtfulness had already rushed off for Enilda.

The Count, as soon as he saw himself surrounded, protested his innocence, and declared he had only assaulted Rozen in self-defence. His protestations, however, elicited no response beyond a dangerous look from Florestan, and a lowering glare from Charlotte Corday.

"Gentlemen," said the Count to his captors, "pray let me give you my name, and you will see that I am a gentleman, and you have no need to detain me by force. I shall be very pleased to give myself into your custody, and see the end of this very painful affair. You forget Mr. Rozen was one of my most cherished friends. I cannot doubt that his attack on me was a sort of temporary madness, and I, alas! like my esteemed friend Louis—I beg your pardon, the late Emperor Louis Napoleon—by no fault of mine I find myself a prisoner."

In spite of the nobleman's remarks and self-assertions of innocence he was regarded with no special leniency by his guard. These gentlemen, like most of the New York police, being mostly Irishmen, two-thirds Fenians, and the other third Nationalists or

Radicals, had no respect for titles, none whatever for gentlemen, and very little for individuals of any class. As they reached the *châlet* where Rozen, still unconscious, was laid on a bed, the Count looked back for the last time, waved his hand in touching farewell, and as he was walked away, said :

“Alas! my poor friend, who would ever have believed that he could have turned upon me as he did? I who have been such a friend, as soon expect a dog in a fit of indigestion to bite his master. God knows, it were almost better to have him murder me than to have retaliated even by a blow directed at my best friend.”

Charlotte and two officers took their place beside Rozen. Happily a doctor, a resident physician, was at that very moment found who succeeded in bringing him back to consciousness. He took Florestan aside and told him, after examination of the wound, that the blow was fatal, and that at best Rozen had but a few hours to live.

“He is a powerful man,” he continued; “otherwise death would have been instantaneous. I’m going to give him a stimulant, and if he has any earthly affairs to settle they must be attended to to-night, and as soon as possible, for his time is very short.”

Florestan then explained the name, position, and estate of the injured man; said that his only

daughter had been sent for, and as their house almost adjoined the Park she might be expected at any moment; then as the victim showed signs of returning life the doctor hastened towards him.

Eric Rozen opened his eyes.

"Mr. Rozen," said the physician, with grave courtesy, "I am deeply grieved, but it is my duty to inform you that you have received a fatal blow. Are you prepared for death?"

Rozen stared strangely at him. The doctor then told him that whatever statement he made would be regarded as an oath, and after several moments had passed Rozen realized the purport of these words, and raising his hand gave solemn utterance to the formula.

"Knowing and believing that I am a dying man, I solemnly swear all I say is the truth—the solemn truth." Then he sunk back seemingly overcome, and silence reigned whilst the doctor administered a second stimulating draught.

"Where is he?" said Rozen, half-opening his eyes and speaking in a faint voice. "Ah! he has done for me at last. I call upon all to witness that I didn't wish to harm him. I begged him to leave me; he was levying black mail I could no longer submit to, and he has murdered me. A Count indeed; he may be a Count for all I know, but I

know him better as the thief, forger, and criminal, Black Bill, I was weak enough to help to assist to escape from the jail of Chicago when the city was burnt five years ago."

Florestan started with horror.

"Black Bill!" he exclaimed. "Impossible!"

At the sound of that voice Rozen attempted to open his eyes. "Who's there?" he asked hoarsely. "Is that Ythan Florestan's voice?"

"Yes, yes," said the latter, pressing forward eagerly. "My poor friend, can I do anything for you? At least you shall be avenged, for not alone I, but Charlotte Corday is a witness; we overheard all your conversation, and saw that villain strike the blow."

"You!" he murmured,—*"you!"* Fate is indeed strange,—you a friend. Oh no!—but Charlotte Corday and Enilda! Where is Enilda?"

"Oh massa, hyare I am," cried Charlotte, throwing herself on her knees; "and Miss 'Nilda's a coming. Dat limb o' Satan has struck you; but please God you'll get right again soon."

"No, no, Charlotte, I shall never be better in this world, and before I leave it I only want to see 'Nilda and tell her all the truth."

"Mr. Rozen," said the doctor solemnly, "we must be prepared for the worst; your earthly affairs—"

"Are all in order. I am going out of the world not exactly as I intended, for I came to this Park to meet a man who has been my enemy for long years; he had nothing against me, and yet he has succeeded in ruining and disgracing me and mine. You think I've got a settler, doctor; well, it's as easy dying with a clear conscience as a cloudy one, so I'll make a clean breast of it. I wanted to be revenged on the man who ruined me. I came here to do for Ythan Florestan what another has done for me, and then make away with myself—end a life that he has rendered no longer bearable to me."

"Impossible," gasped Florestan, starting back in horror. "I pray you, gentlemen, take no heed of what he says; his mind wanders."

"No, no," murmured Rozen faintly; "it won't do. I know exactly what I'm saying, and—what's that?"

His quick ear had caught a footstep on the gravel outside; and before he could say another word Enilda burst into the room and flew to her father's side. His face lit up with a radiance which might have beamed from the face of a seraph. At this juncture the doctor insisted on his swallowing a stimulant. He seemed to revive after that, partially raised his head, and lifted his arm, which he tried to place round Enilda's neck; his eyes seemed still

covered by the same film, but his voice was a little stronger.

"Enilda," he said; "don't cry, child; we all have to go some time, and it's better for you that my time has come now."

"Oh papa, don't say that—don't say that!"

He closed his eyes and went on, meanwhile threading his fingers softly through her hair as he had been wont to do when she was a little girl, and used to sit upon his knee.

"I know I'm going to shock you, and break you all up by what I'm going to say, but I can't go before I've told you the truth; I can't face your mother—for I hope I'm going to meet her—with one lie left on my soul. After she died I went to the bad, but you never knew it. It was out of my love for you. I tried honest means; they didn't work; then dishonest. I wanted to make a fortune for you, Enilda, so you should hold up your head with any lady in the land. You know you're nobody in America unless you've got money. It don't make much difference how you get it, and I was only worse than other men because I got found out. I met Black Bill at Laramie; he called himself a Baron; and we had only struck up a sort of a partnership when I found out who he was in Chicago. Then it was too late to back out. I helped

to free him the night of the fire. He had named me Vane long before: it was easier having two names; it was his idea about doing Arundel; it was—”

His voice faltered and his head fell on his breast.

“Enilda,” he murmured; “where are you?”

“Here, papa;—oh, don’t tell me any more—what can it matter now!—you are so ill, don’t think of it.”

“Where was I?” he said, half-raising his head. “Oh yes; we played euchre in the train, and Florestan—has always been my enemy.”

For the first time Enilda seemed to become aware of the latter’s presence. Without a word she motioned him to her side.

“Papa,” she said softly, “there’s something I want to tell you; Mr. Florestan—”

“Oh, sir,” cried Florestan, springing forward, “pray forgive me the great wrong I have unintentionally done you. I am your friend, I swear it. I love your daughter—do you hear me?—my one wish on earth is to make her my wife;—forgive—”

“Forgive—forgive,” murmured the dying man; “yes—all—Enilda, are you there? It’s growing dark, oh, so dark—I’m cold—what’s that?—the forest—the Indians,—they could not kill you, my beloved—stand back, she’s there, waiting—I hear the brook, and the bird—that mocking bird that used to

sing. We are poor, 'Nilda; but you say we'll be honest, and when we have each other;—ah—ah—”

His head fell backwards, and Eric Rozen's soul passed into the dark valley.

They lifted him and bore him through the Park, now wrapped in the tenderest hues of that fair but dying summer day. Love-birds chanted to their mates, crystal waters cooed and sang in soundless basins, perfumed breezes sighed through arching trees, and as they neared the main avenue faint murmurs of the distant city were borne towards them on the soft night air. The cortège was stopped but once.

A gaudy break loaded with a party of pleasers on their way to High Bridge dashed into the path, but so intent were they on their evening's prospective amusement, that not one look was bestowed upon the silent group drawn up by the roadside.

“You think so,” screamed the voice of a celebrated operatic courtesan. “Not if I know it; I bet before the day is ended I too will hold a diamond—”

“Hush!” cried a companion peremptorily, who at that moment had caught a glimpse of the shutter with its veiled and silent burden. “Hush,” he

continued more softly; "can't you see that is the body of a dead man?"

As the break whirled by voices were stilled and hats reverently lifted. Thus Eric Rozen was saluted for the last time, by any members of the New York Stock Exchange.

CHAPTER XI.

THE civilized world was ringing with the Rozen-Vane scandal; even the London press was filled with leaders and articles touching upon America, Americans, and American society-women in general. The illustrated papers contained portraits of the Copper Queen and her father; society was informed that the lessons to be learnt from this extraordinary lawsuit were not few; that it was time Americans were received with more reserve; that money, beauty, and even brains were not enough, etc., etc.

Whilst the American newspapers from Maine to California and Minnesota to Mexico teemed with stories of the Copper Queen, her introduction to New York life, her family, her father, her position, herself, one daily had devoted columns to their peculiar position and the terrible deception practised upon, not alone all their friends, but upon one in particular: a nobleman of such birth and position

as the Count de Marcie and D'Orbach, "who, it was feared, would gain the lamentable impression that every luxuriant banquet in New York spread in his honour, was presided over by swindlers, gamblers, and diddlers in general." But the climax of excitement was reached when Gotham, which had not recovered the shock of the scandal, learned that Rozen was a dead man, murdered, and by none other than the above-named gentleman. When she realized that her beloved guest, her distinguished model in all that was elegant, exact, and irreproachable was an assassin, excitement knew no bounds, and the city seemed absolutely one voice talking over a murderer and his victim.

Pending the Count's indictment before the grand jury, for a month he was held in durance vile, namely, a series of perfumed, richly-furnished chambers in the Tombs, with attendance, food, and comforts hitherto unknown to him in America. The city was divided against itself into partisans or non-partisans, for while America would believe any iniquity preferred against an American, it was most cautious in entertaining opinions derogatory to a titled foreigner, whose name and presence alone for two seasons had given the city such new social impetus: whose mind had directed Congress and commerce, whose taste had pointed out dishes welcome to even a Lucullus's

palate, whose waltzing was perfection, whose insolence was delicious, whose clothes were perfection, and whose manner upon every occasion breathed the quintessence of an Old World refinement which even the most ancient of American towns could in vain attempt to imitate.

August passed, and part of September; Newport, Long Branch, Saratoga, and Swampscott had one theme—the Eric-Rozen scandal; one refrain—the Rozen murder, and the noble assassin, Count de Marcie and D'Orbach.

In the mean time Enilda lived with Flora, and was personally ignored by the city, which but three months before had yielded her that homage the world always yields to the favoured of nature and fortune; but like the world, when Fortune had withdrawn her smiles, the innocent victim to popular caprice became the criminal. Those who had basked in the sunshine of her society, who had drank her father's wine and partaken of his hospitality were the first to denounce both him and her; those who had danced at her balls and ridiculed the rest of mankind now danced in other circles and ridiculed her. Only a few old friends remained true—the Chromos, the Graysons, the Professor, and Miss Chandos-Cressy; and last but not least, Florestan; —Florestan, who since the night of the murder had

been her shadow, her very second self, but who had never urged his love upon her. He had only said once after the funeral :

“Enilda, I am always yours. I ask nothing now. Look upon me as your friend only. When your father’s death is avenged, then I shall come to you.”

He had longed to protect her with his name, but common sense clearly pointed out to him that however much Enilda might love him, then was not the moment to take advantage of her helplessness. It was perfectly understood at Dr. Grayson’s, however, that he was her accepted lover, and some day they would be married.

Mrs. Chromo had returned from Europe and brought scant news of Ida’s death. The world looked upon a broken blood-vessel as the apparent cause, but Enilda and her world knew the real reason to be a broken heart. A slight paragraph in a leading theatrical journal was consecrated to her obituary; it was read in the morning, ignored at noon, and forgotten by night. Lucy Chromo’s stock of gossip also comprised the news that John Claremont had gone for a year on a yachting tour in the Mediterranean, and that Baron d’Alfredi was much chagrined at Flora’s abrupt departure. She herself, however, was ill and out of sorts. Her affairs were still in the same state; with the exception that she had had

various interviews with her counsel, Lawyer Harkins, her application for divorce had been published, commented upon, and formed a happy pendant to the forthcoming murder trial. Harkins had explained to Mrs. Chromo that her case being a delicate one, the witnesses being the same as those subpoenaed for the great affair, she must absolutely keep her own counsel, confide in and talk with no one before she appeared personally in court. The first hearing of Chromo *versus* Chromo was set down for the first divorce suit at the opening of the autumn sessions, but as Lucy saw the time approach she began to wish more and more that she had not pushed matters to a crisis.

New York was in a fair way to have plenty to talk about; and on the first day of September, in the court of Oyer and Terminer, Fritz de Marcie, known as the Count de Marcie and d'Orbach, was brought up to be tried for the murder of his friend, the late Copper King, Eric Vane Rozen.

Business of the day was given over to attend the trial. Female Gotham had ordered new bonnets and frocks, male Gotham the latest thing in beavers and neckties. Wall Street was even forgotten; Pacific Mail hadn't budged for days, and the best of preferred stock slumbered on its units as a tired child slumbers on its mother's bosom. The only topic was the

murder, the only person talked of de Marcie. Dinners were commanded at clubs, and luncheons at downtown restaurants. Parties were made up to attend at the Criminal Court as they are made up for Henley or Hurlingham: the Attorney-General foreseeing the crush to get into the court-room had issued personal invitations for the ceremonies, without which invitation no outsider could be admitted—these cards, in pasteboard of ominous red, were printed in black, with “De Marcie Trial” in capitals at the head, and the name of the guest, Mr. or Mrs. so-and-so, written in elegant scrip in the corner, with the centre-line in blank, to be filled in, like the usual invitation to a ball or dinner.

New York had talked itself hoarse over the Vane-Rozen scandal; the new millionaire Arundel was the hero in financial circles, the well-known millionaire Florestan the hero in social ones, but the attempted murder of the defendant by Gotham’s pride, in the way of excitement, had actually paralyzed the cosmopolitan community: although having survived centuries of surprises, having been suitably stirred by one horse-scandals, and moderately moved by esclandres on a grander scale, America still yielded the palm to this latest event as the most interesting affair which had been known in the States since George Washington interviewed that cherry tree, or

Wilkes Booth immortalized a family of hitherto only passable comedians, by his Good Friday impromptu in Ford's old Baltimore theatre.

There was as much fuss, jealousy, scheming, and rankling to get tickets for that trial as there is to procure invitations to a State Concert in Buckingham Palace or a ball at Marlborough House. Although marked "personal," these happy bits of crimson card were begged, borrowed, and stolen; were sold at the court-house door from two dollars a single admission and upwards, were advertised in the daily papers as Mitchell advertises his opera-boxes; and one enterprising firm in Broadway had opened a sucursory near the court-house where everything was furnished at a moderate price, from an invitation to a bouquet for the murderer, from opera-glasses down to fans and salts, from photographs of the victim and assassin, to autographs and complete biographies of all parties concerned in the case. There was even a short biographical sketch and profile of the jury, and an hourly bulletin was issued with accounts of the noble murderer's well-being.

It was a lovely day in September. The air without was balmy, and had a suspicion of salt in it, like the air that blows over Sussex from the South Downs. The great court-house was filled with one of the most fashionable and distinguished audiences

which had ever assembled at any criminal trial in Gotham. The windows were thrown open, a fine series of golden rays filled the room with sunshine, and birds' voices floated in happy trills through the airy casements; within were the commingled odours of mignonette, lily of the valley, and gardenia, while at one time the atmosphere seemed one sole breath of Gotham's pet Jacqueminot, which lay in great crimson heaps on the murderer's table.

The judge sat cheery and smiling behind his judicial table. He wore a suit of new and stylish plaid in happy checks; his hair was pomaded, curled, and jaunty, his moustache had a Victor Emanuelian cut; and his cat's-eye studs, like his watch, were new for the occasion; an orchid loomed in his button-hole, his boots were of patent leather, and to the right of his shapely feet an enamelled spittoon reposed in insolent although customary splendour.

The jury in their box looked like a party of gentlemen sitting on a race. They kept up a lively hum of conversation between themselves, whilst every now and then one nodded in friendly license to some acquaintance in the audience, another made notes on his shirt-cuff, or another sent hasty signals to some crowing child: evidently his tender offspring, come to take lessons in the science of murder and American jurisprudence. The Attorney-General

and prosecuting lawyers sat at a square polished table, the former idly cutting quills, the latter engaged in conversation with Flora, who looked her brightest and prettiest. In a seat beside her sat Enilda, closely veiled; to her right at some little distance sat Mr. Florestan, while here and there in close proximity were Prof. Protoplasm, Miss Chandos-Cressy, and Mr. Pastor, naturally arrived from London, with Adam Chromo and others more or less interested in the case. Alone Lucy Chromo had not appeared at the trial. She was fretting about her own divorce suit, and waiting at home until she should be notified to appear in that case, of whose judiciousness at the present moment she began to entertain various and perplexing opinions. She was racked between her love for Enilda and regard for the Count, whose innocence, however, she doubted not, would sooner or later be established.

The judge was seen to yawn, the jury to consult together, the Attorney-General to take up a morning paper. There was a rustle of silks and a confused hum of voices in the outer hall; those voices grew louder and louder, and finally there was a general cry of "Here he comes; here's the prisoner!"

The doors were thrown open and the assassin appeared, walking blandly and upright between two officers, followed by a crowd of pretty women

who tried frantically to touch the hem of his garments, or to kiss his fat white hand. Those ladies would individually have given a year of their lives to have had his autograph, and have gone without ice-cream a whole summer to have received from his noble lips one smile or word which could be treasured up in memory's immemorial store-house. There were dozens of youths who followed in the train, with eye-glass and the latest cut of dittos, with early winter flowers in their button-holes, and pearl kids whose silveriness would have shamed even a Beau Brummel's. But all this passed for naught; the only one "who held the house" was the star of the occasion, the most noble Count de Marcie and d'Orbach who still walked with firm tread, until he neared a table on the right, identical with that of the prosecution.

As the Saxon law permits criminals to defend themselves, the Count, being a gentleman of average intelligence, was not slow to avail himself of this privilege. There was something so courtly in his gait and manner as he strode down the narrow aisle which separated the Attorney-General from the judge and reporters, that a murmur of admiration rose from the crowd: this he acknowledged by frequent bows and bland smiles, as Royalties bow from their carriage in the Park, or the Hippodrome

stars in their Roman chariots bow to the public at the Paris circus. He first saluted his honour most civilly, and his honour returned the courtesy in an equally civil fashion; for it had no more been proved that the prisoner at the bar was a murderer than that he was a Count. He also bowed gravely to the jury and the prosecuting attorney, receiving anon civil salutations, anon half-dazed stares, from the general assembly. He smiled as he passed Flora, and said cheerily:

“How do you do, Miss Grayson?”—and to another old friend—“Ah, Stuart, glad to see you; lovely day, isn't it? Family well?—that's right!—all here—naturally. I am glad to see my friends in force on such a memorable occasion.” Then he placed his hand on his heart with an air which would not have disgraced Versailles, and turned towards Miss Chandos-Cressy, saying: “Thanks, dear friend, for your touching little note. Ah! so soon as this unpleasant little affair is over, we will re-live the past in an old-fashioned chat in Mrs. Chromo's porcelain gallery.”

A few more nods and gentle salutations finally brought him to a table which was heaped with bouquets, love-letters, letters of sympathy, letters requesting his autograph, and letters from theatrical managers begging the first refusal of a starring tour

over America just as soon as the little affair should be satisfactorily terminated.

The attendance being complete, the crier got up with the usual formula—"Oyez, oyez. Hear ye, all ye persons who have business in this court now opening—draw near and ye shall be heard."

The court was then declared open, and the clerk of the court called the case. The prosecuting attorney began his case with the usual formula:

"Mr. Foreman and gentleman of the jury, we are here to inquire into the manner in which the deceased, Eric Rozen, met his death; and I expect to prove to you that the said deceased was foully murdered on the night of August 5th, in the west side of Central Park by the prisoner at the bar, Fritz de Marcie; known as the Count de Marcie and d'Orbach."

The District Attorney then marshalled his facts and presented the case to the jury in language of unusual eloquence, then read the deceased's dying declaration, which caused the greatest sensation in the court. The prisoner at the bar, who sat at his flower-bedecked table, retained at first a passive demeanour; but he turned very pale when the prosecution read the statement regarding the late trial, and that the Count was none other than the notorious criminal "Black Bill." The audience broke into

threatening demonstrations towards the prisoner, who glanced warily around for a moment, then burst into such a series of ironical shrieks that the court-room became a scene of wild confusion : the hearing of the case was almost impossible. Order finally restored, the District Attorney concluded by an offer of evidence direct—eye-witnesses, not alone of the murder, but witnesses who had overheard a conversation held between the deceased and the prisoner at the bar, the which conversation absolutely nullified prisoner's pretence of justification, self-defence, etc. The first witness was then called.

Ythan Florestan took his place in the box, and after the usual formula began to give his testimony. He related all that had transpired already known, but when he came to the question of going to the Park, he was interrupted by the prisoner :

Prisoner.—"Mr. Florestan, you know you have always hated my late cherished friend ; you asked him to meet you in the Park,—can you tell why ?"

Florestan flushed.

"Must I answer that ?" he asked.

The judge ruled that the question was one which required an answer. Florestan began to explain, when he stopped again.

The Count smiled.

"My good fellow," he said, "you asked him to

meet you in the Park for one purpose;—you hated him, you hated me, and you longed to get him out of the country. When a man is in love with another man's daughter—”

Cries of “Shame, shame,” re-echoed throughout the court-room. “Silence, silence!” screamed the crier. Then the Count continued :

“Well, we'll drop that. What did you want to meet him for?”

Florestan looked around helplessly for a moment; then lifting his head haughtily spoke :

“I know what I am going to say.”

“Never mind what you are going to say,” interrupted the prisoner; “damn it, say what you did.”

Witness.—“I wrote, making an appointment with the deceased to meet me in West Central Park, as I intended offering—”

Prisoner.—“Never mind what you intended; what did you do?”

The court interposed. The prisoner's interruptions made any statement impossible. The judge gave a ruling that the witness's intentions must be accepted as evidence, as they explained the reason of his having made an appointment with deceased. After that Florestan continued, and not without a certain embarrassment managed to say why he had

written to Rozen. As he finished, the Count arose with a laugh.

"Gentlemen of the jury," he said, "I am franker even than the witness. I can't gain sympathy by saying I went to offer my dear friend a fortune. I didn't; on the contrary, I went to ask my late cherished chum for a trifling sum of money; my own, note, due to me on account of certain mutual business transactions which had not been settled; but it seems if a man asks for his own now-a-days he's insulted and treated as I have been."

The court here interposed and informed the prisoner that his reflections had nothing to do with the case in hand; and he was ordered either to continue his cross-examination or to dismiss the witness.

Florestan was obliged to have recourse to all his patience. The Count's insolence was unbounded; and it was impossible not to see that his coolness and cleverness were producing an immense impression in his favour. The most damning facts were received with perfect equanimity; he turned every phrase against him with a suspicion against the witness, and Florestan was finally so nonplussed as to be unable to speak without saying exactly the opposite of what he originally intended, or contradicting himself where contradiction was the one

thing to be avoided. The Count played with him as a cat plays with a mouse. At last he said :

“I have nothing more to ask you, Mr. Florestan ; only beg to remark that you painfully exaggerate that last scene. You certainly verified the old saw, that listeners hear no good of themselves.”

A murmur ran through the court-room. Florestan's evidence had excited such enthusiasm that little more was left to verbal expression.

Charlotte Corday next took the stand. As is usual when a negro or negress is seen in any prominent position, the air resounded with rude speeches : “How are you, auntie ?” “Guess it's going to rain to-day.” “The air is filled with thunder,” etc., etc., but, silence finally imposed, Charlotte began her recital. She took the oath with such solemnity that a hush suddenly fell on the multitude. The prosecution had put but few questions when the Count, proof as usual against any sentiment, broke out :

“Well, auntie, it grieves me profoundly to see you in this painful position. How things have changed since last we met, eh ? I suppose you have the same cock-and-bull story as Mr. Florestan to relate. Well—when did you first see me to know me ?”

Charlotte looked disdainfully at him, as if re-

flecting whether or no she would answer, then replied :

“The first time I seed you, woz won day wen I was in my massa’s room—his study ; I was looking for—”

“My God !” interrupted the prisoner, jumping up. “You were there ?—it was you ? If I had known that you—”

“Silence !” screamed the crier ; “don’t interrupt the witness.”

“Go on !” cried the Count ; “go on ;—what else ?”

He vainly tried to hide his impatience, but when Charlotte Corday described her visit to her master’s room, her hunt for the picture, and her long concealment behind the curtain, he suddenly cried :

“That won’t do ! That is no evidence. If you were hidden behind curtains, absolutely out of sight, you couldn’t have seen me—or, well, I admit I was there ; but even had you tried—confess you’re lying—you never saw any one but yourself ; and you were—gentlemen of the jury, I beg you will not pay any attention to this evidence ; in fact, the old woman’s crazy. It’s irreparable being black, but it’s abominable being crazy, and I—”

The judge interrupted, and ordered the prisoner to use more polite language. The prosecution finally elicited an important fact from Charlotte Corday in

answer to the question as to her recognition of the prisoner.

“When Massa Rozen thought he heard some one, and came to look, he jes pulled dem curtains onside; but frew ’em back in sich a way he left a creak—wich I could see frew perfectly, but he couldn’t see me.”

The prosecution here explained to the court’s satisfaction the way in which such a thing could have taken place. The prisoner interrupted with scoffing remarks, and finally Charlotte turned upon him :

“Jes shet up, varmint. I heered everything then. I saw you want to kill massa den and dar. Massa said, ‘I ain’t worf it’;—but you—golly, ef you’d e gub me a chance, I’d e a thought no more a puttin’ you out of sight nor stampin’ my heel on a sarpint’s head in de walk. I jes took yer misable face in, and saw it ag’in and ag’in in Lunnen too, and said then the yarth ’ll never be clean till it’s rid of you !”

Charlotte’s voice rose to such a pitch of rage that it was impossible not to be impressed. The examination continued, while the Count laughed uproariously.

P. A. Question.—“What did the prisoner at the bar say to the deceased? Try and remember his exact words.”

Witness.—"He called Massa Vane, and made him mad. Then he axed massa fur fifty thousand dollars, and he said, 'I wanted to have dot last tranaction absolutely in my name.' Massa replied, 'You're modest—is that all?' 'No,' sez the Count; 'a man muss be put out of the way, and—'"

"That's a lie!" interrupted the prisoner; "a lie blacker, if possible, than your face!"

"Silence in the court!" said the crier, while a thrill of horror ran over the audience: the prisoner was seen to change colour, and anon fretfully drum his fingers on the table, or rake them through his hair.

Charlotte continued:

"Massa wuz struck, and said, 'A man—not Arundel:' but dot vilyian 'plied—'Suppose I should say Mr. Florestan—'"

"This is too much!" screamed the prisoner; "am I to have my life lied away by that low-lived wench? Were I in England I should be tried by Peers; here—this civilized country, gentlemen of the jury, I protest: wait till I cross-examine her."

The judge arose, but for some moments tried in vain to enforce silence. Charlotte's words had produced an indescribable excitement, and none could doubt their authenticity. Whilst her examination

went on, one could have heard a pin drop in the room.

P. A. Question.—"What did the deceased reply?"

Answer.—"Massa went white, and sed, 'You are a fiend incarnate. You think all the world like yarself! Why did I fall so low?—you're a murderer, a villyan, and a scoundrel!' Then he—massa—said: 'The end muss com' som' time, why not now?' Golly, my hair stud on end, but I didn't dare move, 'cause I said to myself, 'Honey, you muss listen now to defend—' "

The defence here interrupted the witness, and the Judge ordered her to be more relevant. Poor Charlotte's eyes rolled to their widest when she heard the word relevant, and her facial and bodily contortions were something beyond words. The prisoner, court, and audience were in fits, whilst the prosecution vainly tried to explain to her what the word meant. The Count blandly interrupted between his shrieks of laughter:

"It's all right, auntie. When one lies by the yard as you do, it doesn't make the slightest difference whether they do it clearly or not!" Then he was seized with another paroxysm, smelt his salts, and finally gasped out, "Oh, this is too much! I shall certainly die of cramp!"

The step between the sublime and ridiculous was so slight a one that judge, jury, court, counsel, and

audience went off into one long scream ; the room re-echoed again and again to the sound of hysterical laughter. Flora nearly choked, trying to keep her countenance. Adam Chromo was positively convulsed ; whilst Miss Chandos-Cressy laughed till the tears came and watered her cheeks in long streaks with a mixture of black, red, and white—a triple combination of kohl, diluted bismuth, and cherry-paste.

The judge was the first to recover, whilst Charlotte, dignified, although fuming with inward rage at the interruption, was in such absolute ignorance of its cause, that her attitude was only the more amusing ; but to look at her was to begin again. Finally order was restored, but not silence, and her examination recommenced. The above-named incident had so changed the current of her recital, however, that imagination kept pace with her words, and saw fun in everything she did and said. One could even see her skulking in the study, and almost feel the contortions she must have made in her forced concealment. Little by little, however, she regained lost ground. A nothing sways a mob or a criminal court, and when she neared the end of her recital, and told how she had followed her master to the Park, the excitement knew no bounds.

“I followed ’im like a cat,” she continued ; “he

met a man who gave 'im a slip of paper—a piece of a torn card, den dis man went to the Park. Massa Rozen followed him and I followed massa: in the mean time massa sot down on a bench, and I snaked in a thicket right near back of him. Then I saw the Count come up.” Here followed a confused but sufficiently clear statement of the conversation which had taken place between the deceased and prisoner at the bar up to the last scene. The prisoner’s interruptions were fabulous, but the witness went bravely on :

“He told massa he must have two hundred thousand dollars; then massa refused. Then I suddenly saw Massa Florestan near, and I beckoned 'im to come softly up to me—which he did—and heard all the rest of the conversation. We was looking anxiously when, lo and behold! dot Count seized Massa Rozen, whipped out his bowie-knife, and stuck him then and there. Self-defence! Massa Eric wouldn’t have harmed a worm in his path. He had begged the Count before to leave 'im, but he wouldn’t; and the Count killed him, as he wanted to do that day in massa’s own library, only he didn’t dare. But God 'ull punish you.” She shook her fist at the prisoner. “Spec’s my skin’s black, but your soul’s blacker den my whole body.”

At this the audience burst into applause. The

crier in vain demanded order. There were screams of "Lynch him, lynch him!"—and even the prisoner began to show a changing colour. The judge suddenly ruled that unless silence were obtained the trial would be conducted in secret, and the hubbub finally subsided.

The Count tried in vain to cross-question Charlotte; she replied with such infinite cunning and skill that, for the moment, he was absolutely quelled. The prosecution certainly had a strong case, and as one after another gave direct evidence it seemed as though the prisoner were a maniac even to attempt any defence.

Enilda's examination although short was a most painful one, and tended mainly to prove the constancy of the Count's visits to her father's house, his friendly relationship with herself and father, and the deceased's dying declaration which she had witnessed; what she thought of the Count of late, etc. The Count's cross-examination was merely in name.

Question.—Miss Rozen, you say you have seen me many times: at present I will not ask you where nor when; I will merely remark that whether you did or did not like me has nothing to do with the case. On the contrary, I should have imagined you did from your manners, than which those prevailing

at Schonbrun were not more courtly. I have always admired you immensely, and so much regret giving a lady trouble, that I beg you to believe me when I repeat that I should be ashamed to put any questions whatsoever to you, and beg you will consider yourself dismissed."

The prisoner arose as he said these last words, and bowing with the most courtly gravity, placed a hand on his heart with a gesture which would not have shamed Talma.

Enilda's examination closed the day's proceedings, and the court adjourned until the following morning. As the Count went out he threw kisses to several ladies in the audience, bowed with his usual courtesy to every human being he had ever known, and stopping an instant said to the jury :

"Gentlemen, believe me I am sorry to give you such trouble. I shall drink your health this evening in a bottle of Mother Clicquot's yellow label, and only regret that I cannot have the pleasure of your company—that I must drink alone. Good evening; ta, ta"—and his retreating figure was lost in the crowd which closed around him, as his words were lost in the storm of hisses which their frivolity had aroused.

CHAPTER XII.

It was the fifth day of the trial, and the prosecution were on the point of closing their case.

Early in the morning the court-room was densely crowded. The weather was if possible brighter than on the day previous; there was a hum of cheerful conversation, while now and then the echo of a happy laugh rang around the vaulted chamber. The judge, jury, and court were seated awaiting the prisoner, who at last appeared in faultless attire, scattering smiles right and left as he came in. His exquisite form and airy motion exhaled the unconscious fragrance that emanates from the waving honeysuckle or the mountain-rose, he scented the very air as he walked. As he passed by, the jury sniffed, and the prosecuting attorney lifted his head with the instinctive gesture of a desk-bound clerk who after ten consecutive months of areas, pigeon-holes and tiles, finds himself taking in a full

breath of sea or meadow air. The prisoner reached his table, as usual heaped with piles of letters and superb flowers, but no sooner sat down than he jumped up, declaring some one had put a pin in the seat of the chair. He turned with a beaming look towards the prosecution, and shook a playful finger in Lawyer Harkins's face.

"Confess," he said playfully; "Harkins, you did it; you alone are capable of such a little joke; but the next time remember that—well, I am not like the British soldier—padded; and I not only see but feel deeply the point of your little scheme."

The audience were in shrieks; even Harkins laughed till he cried. The prisoner continued:

"This is a droll country. Some devils wanted me to start a new paper to describe my wrongs, brought capital to the jail, and said I would have all America at my feet when it was known how a man of my rank was being treated, etc., etc. They were journalists, poor fellows—wretched trade, but I suppose a necessary one in an enlightened country. I need not say I refused the proffered capital and honour."

The Count sat down with a gentle sigh, and whilst the clerk began the usual ceremony of declaring the court opened, he "ah'd"—"eh'd"—smelt of first one bouquet then another—murmured rapturously to

himself over the contents of one letter, or smiled over the wit of another. He talked with his counsel, who sat modestly at his right, or flung uncalled-for sarcasms at the prosecuting attorney over the heads of his nearest neighbours. His humour was something so gay, so infectious, that its contagion spread like a prairie fire; even the judge found himself smiling every now and then without the slightest notion why. Ladies in the audience told risky stories to their neighbours, and the jury looked as if out on a holiday. The Attorney-General sat somewhat away from his table, and with elaborate emphasis drew special attention to the Count's witty remarks; each time the assassin was particularly brilliant he said joyfully:

“Just listen to him—isn't he funny? Isn't it just a circus to hear him go on like that?” etc., etc.

At last the trial resumed. Florestan and Enilda having already given their evidence, as well as the officers who had assisted at Rozen's death, the witness to be examined to-day was Ricard, a certain agent of the Rozen-Vane Copper Company. Many witnesses had inadvertently helped the Count by their testimony; even Adam Chromo had been obliged to state that in mutual affairs with the deceased and prisoner, the latter's dealings had ever been of the most honourable and cordial character.

The prosecution, sure of their case the first day, now could not help feeling alarmed at the Count's growing popularity. In short this gentleman so won over court, jury, witnesses, and audience, that a vague idea was current that he was a much-injured man;—he had done well to put such a wretch as Rozen out of the way, etc., etc.

Ricard entered the witness-box and was handed the Bible.

As soon as the Count saw him he put his hands on his hips and burst into such fits of laughter that the court in vain called "Order—silence—order!" When the prisoner could speak from choking, he pointed a finger at Ricard, and gasped out :

"Oh! this is too rich!—look at him, do look at him!"

Every one looked. The clerk snatched away the Holy Book, and was about to present it a second time with the usual formula, when a second outburst from the Count and the audience caused him to withdraw it with a bewildered but also gradually dawning smile.

"Look at the witness," continued the prisoner.

"Do you know him?" interrupted the counsel for the State, addressing himself to the Count.

"Do I know him? Well, I've kicked him out of my house often enough to know him; but, by the

way, excuse my smile, and pardon the frankness of an early friend. I know you, Harkins; it's no use—that last little racket we had at High Bridge, etc., etc. But to continue;—you hand him a Bible, you ask *him* to swear;—oh no, that's really too good!”

The Count burst into another scream, and buried his head deep amongst the Jacqueminots on his table. A third time the clerk put the question, “You hereby swear to,” etc., and presented the sacred book. Ricard this time really took it into his hands, when the prisoner suddenly jumped to his feet, and slapping his hand vigorously on his table, cried:

“This performance is too much, it is an insult to any gentleman. Women and men of America, it's an insult to you and to your religion, bought with the price of the blood of millions of Christians. He swear!—he know the value of an oath! Let him swear, if he wants to, on a package of some of his old clothes sold in Chatham Street. He know the nature of an oath! Why, you only want one glance at him to know that his ancestors took part in the Crucifixion, and that he himself has never been baptized on the forehead. Oh no,—oh no, Harkins, that won't do.”

The Count sat calmly down; but the court and witness were so much moved that for a moment nothing could be heard but a pro and con hubbub of

explanation. After impossible interruptions the witness announced that he was of Israelite descent, but now a Catholic, and perfectly capable of taking the oath; whereupon it was administered to the accompaniment of a Babel of voices and such ejaculations from every one near the Count, that a stranger to the solemnity of American murder trials turned to a friend, and said:

“Really one might perfectly well take the scene for a most animated conversazione.”

The prosecuting attorney questioned Ricard.

Q.—“How long have you known prisoner at the bar?”

A.—“Longer than ever I should like to tell.”

“Yes, damn it!” interrupted the Count, “I should think so; I have been his best friend. I—go on.”

Question. P. A.—“When did you first meet the prisoner at the bar?”

A.—Nervously. “Must I answer that?”

The court. “Decidedly.”

“Oh, I’ll answer for him,” interrupted the Count. “Ricard’s a poor devil; I met him years ago in Hamburg. He was a footman; seemed to have some disposition for the career, so I took him into my service, and finally kicked him out for—for being a fool. He ran across me in America, and told a

tale of how he had not got on in life, and begged me to help him to some new place."

P. A.—"And he really helped you?"—to witness.

Prisoner.—"Look here, Harkins, don't speak of me in that stand-offish fashion. Pray remember my birth. Help him?—why I got him a place with Rozen. Look here, you vile brute, didn't I—haven't I done everything for you? Say what you've got to say and leave the box, I'm tired of looking at you."

The audience burst into applause. "Silence!" thundered the clerk of the court. The examination went on.

P. A.—"Now, Mr. Ricard, will you kindly tell me what you know of the prisoner at the bar at the time you first met in Hamburg?"

Ricard paled, rubbed his hands, and looking anxiously around as if seeking some familiar eye, began:

"When I knew him at Hamburg, he called himself the Baron Marcie. I was his footman. He lived in grand style, but was arrested for swindling, implication in a murder, and was—"

"You're a d—d liar!" shrieked the Count; "and if I could get near to you, you'd never say that again to me. Gentlemen, this is a put-up job," he said, addressing the court and jury; "he tried to black mail

me the other day. I wouldn't stand it; he tried the same thing on with my dear friend Rozen, and you see now;—look at him—the man is mad, and I call upon the court to remove this witness.”

Judge—“Prisoner at the bar, silence! Mr. Ricard, be good enough to continue your evidence.”

W.—“A murder, and—”

“That a lie,” said the Count.

W.—“A murder, and was tried—”

“That's another lie”—same interruption, this time without looking up from his table.

P. A.—“Witness, continue.”

W.—“He was tried and sentenced to—”

“Will you shut up!” screamed the prisoner; “what do you want to lie like that for? Say that you were sentenced, that you got the galleys for life, or at least merited them, but—”

The judge suddenly sat bolt upright.

“Order!” his honour cried. “The prisoner at the bar must observe the rules of the court, or be removed.”

A loud and emphatic general chorus of “Yes—yes—yes” followed this announcement. Ricard assumed a waiting attitude, and was again requested to continue.

At this juncture the Count began to hum in an undertone, “Mother, may I go out to swim?” beat-

ing the measure in a gentle tattoo on the leg of the table.

Ricard continued his testimony, and the Count his refrain; but, like Florestan, the former was soon completely off his balance. He recapitulated and wavered to such an extent that even the judge offered ruling, and was obliged to put questions categorically as to their recent connection with the prisoner. In spite of this Ricard was back on the subject of Hamburg, and repeated himself so prodigiously that Harkins began to despair.

Question. P. A.—"How long were you in the service of, not the prisoner at the bar, but of deceased?"

W. "Well, if I had stayed with the—the prisoner as I had at first intended; but he lived in grand style only for a—"

Interruption. Prisoner again without looking up:

"That's stale; we've heard that twenty times;—give us something fresh, my good Ricard." *

Witness.—"For a year."

"Well—well—well!" screamed the Count, this time raising his head;—"a year! Why, you've more cheek than an army mule; a year!—you weren't with me three months."

District Attorney, ignoring prisoner's interruption, continued:

* Guiteau trial, Washington, 1882.

P. A.—"I asked you how long you were in the service of deceased?"

Witness.—"I—I—well—I met Mr. Rozen, and he liked me very much. I worked for him six years or more; the Count spoke of Hamburg—"

"Curse Hamburg," interrupted the prisoner. "Ricard, I guess if you don't want to hang yourself you'd better shut up; you're making more rope for yourself out of nothing than a year's crop of hemp on a Texas farm would produce."

This little sally was received with general laughter.

Ricard went on talking, the Count humming; finally the latter said good-naturedly:

"Oh, go on with your lies, Ricard, if you like. I don't bear malice. Look here; how much have the other side paid you to come here and chirp those infernal Hamburg reminiscences? but—gad, I may say thanks, for it serves to remind me of those adorable days of the past. However, I must add, when my dear friend Joe—I beg your pardon, His Majesty—"

"Hear him," whispered the Attorney-General, nudging Mr. Pastor; "what do you think of him?"

"Oh," rejoined Pastor, "delightful; quite like the Palais Royal; are all American murder trials like this?"

"Oh, not quite all," frankly admitted the man of

law ; “ but this is a special one, from the fact of the exalted station of all parties concerned. But that man—clever, you know—foreign name or not, he defends himself like an American. Listen to him ; see how he tries to amuse the jury.”

“ How he does amuse the jury ! ” cried Pastor.

“ Come now,” interrupted the Count, “ I still have a blank cheque-book ; I bear no malice ; let us—but—judge, by the way, why should we hurry this gentleman ? What do you say to a bit of luncheon ? ”

The audience seemed struck by the wisdom of this remark. The judge hemmed—hawed—and after spitting into the enamelled cuspidor at his left, really started to take out his watch, but compromised by only glancing up at a huge uncouth clock, modelled after the first Strasburg effort, jauntily bracketed between two windows on the east side of the court-room. The hour of one marked on the open face of this primitive time-keeper spoke in eloquent favour of the prisoner’s motion.

“ Well,” said Adam Chromo, “ not to put too fine a point upon it, the old clock on the stairs seems to be the only clear-headed thing in this concern. I think I’ll just chip out and have a blue point stew and get in again. What do you think of Ricard’s testimony ? ”

He addressed himself to Florestan, who muttered

a few words in response, then turned to Flora, Enilda, and Miss Chandos-Cressy, the former answered by a "Yes," and for the next few moments nothing was heard but lively chatter all around.

The court adjourned for half-an-hour for luncheon. The Count made his way out under his escort as smilingly as he had come in. A cloud of waiters suddenly seemed floating about with suspicious-looking baskets filled with fruits and food for the many who did not care to leave the court-room. Benches were turned into tables, and the air was filled with the cheerful buzz and hum of a perfectly contented crowd. Men, women, and children rushed laughing and talking, hither and thither, and some little boys tried sly games of ball or marbles on the court-room floor. Had there been giant trees, a lawn and a river in sight in the distance, without the slightest difficulty one could have imagined the scene an American Sunday School picnic. As it was, its hilarity was undeniable, and no amount of bare walls, benches, or instruments of the law could detract from the gaiety of this typical reunion. Punctually to the moment the Court and public re-entered.

Ricard was still in the witness-box, but he seemed suddenly possessed with a bad memory. "The murder rumour," he said, "was unimportant. The Baron as he then was, went away, and some said he'd gone to

his country seat; others that he had been transported." The prisoner at the bar simply laughed at every word Ricard said, and finally added:

"Ricard, I guess you'd better let up on the Hamburg business, or—"

"I protest," said the counsel for the prosecution, "the prisoner is intimidating the witness."

The judge, as is usual after the jury have calmly taken in the things they ought not to hear, spoke up energetically, admonishing that august body that the remarks about Hamburg were irrelevant, and could not be admitted as evidence. "'Somebody said' is not evidence," declared his honour. "The witness must either know or not know personally, how and in what manner the prisoner at the bar left Hamburg, otherwise his remarks cannot be considered relevant." The judge sat down.

"Then," said the Count, addressing the witness, "you blundering old blockhead, can't you get up now and flit before you're called off."

"Silence in the court!" The crier was beginning to look pale, anxious, and haggard-eyed; even his voice faltered as he pronounced the last word.

The Count turned angrily round and addressed himself to the clerk. "Shut up yourself; it strikes me this is my funeral, and if any one has got a right to say anything, I have."

This speech was followed by a general series of expostulations from court, judge, and attorneys. Whilst the excitement was at its height, a lady, closely-veiled and dressed in black, quietly entered the room; she was ushered in by a mysterious youth wearing a bland but rather idiotic smile.

Mr. Harkins arose and addressed himself to the judge.

"I think, your honour, the witness Ricard may be dismissed for the present, but we will call for him to-morrow; meanwhile I have the names of several other witnesses who might be re-examined, amongst others, Mr. Chromo." The court repeated the name without receiving any response; Mr. Chromo was called again. "Not here!" some one answered. "He has not returned to the court since luncheon."

"But I am here," called out a muffled voice; and the veiled lady, who had entered a few moments previously, quietly made her way round back of the jury, and before any one could expostulate was hastily conducted into the witness-box.

"What's this?" said Harkins. "Voluntary testimony? From whom?" The lady raised her veil. "Mrs. Chromo!" he ejaculated. "Impossible! you were too ill to leave your bed."

Sensation in the Court. At that very moment

Adam Chromo entered the room, saw his wife in the box, and gasped :

“Lucy Chromo, what are you doing there?”

The Count half rose in his seat, and waved a ringed white hand towards her.

“My cherished friend!” he cried; “this is indeed kind. Welcome, welcome!”

“Silence in the court!” thundered the clerk; at the same time the oath was administered to the lady. Absolutely ignoring the nature of Mrs. Chromo’s testimony, the prosecution cautiously began:

Q.—“When did you first meet the defendant in this case?”

Lucy clasped her hands, and raised her eyes towards heaven.

“Sir,” she responded, “this is unkind; you begin by touching such a tender chord. Where did I first meet him? Years ago, when I was a happy child in my mother’s house in Schonhegan, and he told me that he loved me!”

“What!” screamed Adam Chromo, “and you dare to speak of a thing like that at a time like this!”

“Silence!” thundered the clerk, bringing his mace to the floor in a terrible thud.

Mr. Harkins tried in vain to get near enough to Lucy Chromo to stop her; but a new order, “Do

not interrupt the witness," this time from the judge, was followed by a momentary silence.

Q. P. A.—"You say you met the prisoner at the bar?"

Lucy raised her eyes, and murmured to herself: "Think of his being called that, and all on my account!"

"At the bar," continued the prosecution, "when you were a young girl? We do not like to put indelicate questions to a lady, but could you tell—?"

"Oh, you mean how old am I?" burst out Lucy, sobbing. "What can it matter if I tell the truth? Thirty-seven;—it was twenty years ago, and I've loved him all my life. Oh sir! I'm a miserable woman; I'm utterly wretched! It's all along of glue. Now that I'm here I wish I wasn't. Don't stop me; let me go on; let me tell the truth—God knows I truly love him!"

The judge, jury, court, and public truly wondered what was coming.

At this juncture Lucy lifted a lace handkerchief to her deluged eyes, and for an instant nothing was heard but short and hysterical mutterings.

Amazement kept Adam Chromo speechless in his seat, whilst the court seemed equally struck dumb. Before one could address her, however, she tore the morsel of linen from her face and went on:

"I think I've used him very badly, and I now say here before everybody—I mean I really love him and none other!"

Q. P. A.—"We must beg the witness to be rather more relevant. I beg your pardon, but what has that to do with this case? You say you have known the prisoner at the bar—"

"Twenty years," interrupted Lucy with dignity.

A low whistle echoed through the court-room. The Count rose hastily, followed by his counsel, who at this juncture thought proper to put a question to the witness; and before his client could speak he said:

"You say you have known him twenty years?" The prisoner at the bar turned pale. "Let up on that," he whispered; "when the time comes I'll cross-question her," motioning the indiscreet questioner back into his seat.

Mr. Harkins rose. "I think we may safely ask one question: How long—"

"Ask me anything you like!" wailed Lucy. "I shall still repeat, 'Long enough to have known how to treat him better.' Don't stop me; let me speak now and tell all the truth. He would not give up business; I said then it must be a divorce. If he prefers glue to me, then let him stick to it. But now the Count has betrayed me; he is married to

two women, and one dead—" The Count vainly tried to stop the witness; she continued, turning to the latter, whom she saw smiling at his table.

"Oh, laugh! heartless monster, laugh! I know all; Fraulein Marx has told all, and I—do you think if I were fifty times free, I would ever marry you? No. I give up the idea for ever. I hate glue; but I shall stick to it. I swear I will not be divorced;—I—"

"Stop!" thundered the judge, rising and spitting with violence in the gorgeous cuspidor. "Stop!—this is going too far; remove the witness!"

The wildest excitement prevailed. Adam Chromo rushed to his wife; Harkins rushed to Chromo; Lucy screamed, and refused to leave the witness-box. The Count kept yelling, "Quite right; stay there, stay there!"

"How dare you treat me so!" she ejaculated between her sobs. "I—I—haven't I a right to say what I want to at my own divorce suit?"

"Divorce!" said the judge. "Divorce!" echoed Flora. "Divorce!" echoed the Count;—"the woman's mad!"

Lucy turned pale.

"Oh!" she gasped; "what do you mean? Going mad? Ah! ah! I see it all now. A young man took me by the arm,—'In here,' he said; 'explain

nothing; then when you're name is called, rush into the witness-box.' I knew you were deceiving me! You too, Harkins; you didn't want to tell me when the day was, but I accidentally read in the 'Herald's' law list—Chromo *vs.* Chromo, and I felt at once that you wanted the case to come off and not let me know. Then too—I—I felt sorry for him. But you"—she shook her fist in the face of judge, jury, and court—"fiends incarnate! you have gone and divorced me without my knowledge! I am—but I refuse to go till I've had my say; I swear I love him, let all the world hear it;—I am still his wife, and refuse to leave him, I will not be DIVORCED THERE"—and sobbing she flung herself into her husband's outstretched arms, and buried her head on his shoulder.

"Remove the witness!" again thundered the judge. "No; let her stay!" screamed the audience. "Remove the witness!" yelled his honour; "is the sanctity of a murder trial—"

Lucy suddenly came to.

"What!" she cried; "what do I hear? Isn't this my divorce going on? What is this suit any way?"

"This, madam," said the prosecuting attorney pleasantly; "this is the Rozen murder trial; you are evidently labouring under some little mistake."

“Mistake?—murder!” screamed Lucy. “Ah! I see now, ah!—ah!—with what I’ve gone through. This isn’t my divorce after all! Husband—help! I faint, I die!” and pawing the air frantically, Lucy Chromo fell in a dead swoon back in Adam Chromo’s arms. It is impossible to describe the effect of Lucy Chromo’s words; and equally impossible to describe the scene which ensued. When the reason of her appearance was thoroughly understood, in spite of her fainting, the court could no longer contain itself, and joined with the public in the general uproar.

Enilda, Flora, Miss Chandos-Cressy, Florestan and Professor Protoplasm hastily followed Adam Chromo out. He bore his wife in his strong arms as if she had been a feather weight, and the expression on his face would have baffled a Rembrandt.

This episode really closed the day’s proceedings. Several unimportant witnesses were examined, but their irrelevance threw the court in such disarray that the judge abruptly announced adjournment till the morrow, and thus closed the fifth day of the celebrated Rozen murder trial.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE sixth day began with testimony from Chicago detectives come to establish the identity of the prisoner with that of the notorious Black Bill, who years before had escaped from the jail on the night of the great fire of '71. This was not easy; and Pinkerton's police, although as celebrated as the Russian "Third Section," Scotland Yard, or the famous Parisian Bureaux, were obliged to admit they could not swear that the Count de Marcie and D'Orbach and the ruffian, forger, and criminal Black Bill, were one and the same man. Having had no photograph of the villain, it was impossible to say positively that the detained nobleman was really the one whose name had become such a terror in the West. Black Bill was known to have had a slight scar on his left arm, whilst the nobleman De Marcie had not alone a scar but a curious cut or blister which extended nearly to the elbow, and was

altogether different from the one worn by Black Bill. As to the officers who could swear to his identity through having seen him in the Chicago jail, two were dead and one a lunatic; hence the prisoner at the bar need fear nothing from them.

The trial dragged on. It seemed as if half New York were subpoenaed either for the prosecution or the defence. The former were still hard at it, and the court-room if possible was more crowded than ever; perhaps a waiting world came also in the hopes of assisting at another Lucy Chromo episode. In vain the daily press teemed with news of the trial. The Chromo divorce furnished, if possible, a more ample theme, until the announcement was publicly made that the suit was withdrawn, and Lucy Chromo as suddenly surprised Gotham by appearing at the trial on—Adam Chromo's arm.

The weeks had dwindled into months, and still the Count de Marcie was held in *durance vile*. After the failure of Pinkerton to prove that he was Black Bill public opinion changed, and people asked one another if the noble prisoner were not really a victim to personal spite and revenge, and speculation became rife as to the probable issue of the trial.

December came with its snow and sleet, and the succeeding weeks witnessed the same brilliant audiences, the same enthusiasm, and the same light,

cheerful conversation which had been noticeable on former occasions. On the morning of the 31st, a bright, crisp day had attracted a very full house, more than half the public being ladies. When the Count came in, his appearance was somewhat comical owing to the extreme cold. He was shivering, and muffled up in a great-coat. He complained of the cold, and the audience heartily concurred with him, for the room was enormous, and lack of heat caused every one to shiver. Of late the noble prisoner had been somewhat crusty and downhearted, but the cheerful sunlight that streamed through the great windows seemed to exercise a joyous influence over him; and the court, jury, the counsel and audience laughed and re-laughed as he with earnest simplicity shouted out that one of his guards, a member of the New York police, "had had an eleven pound little baby presented to him as a New Year's gift."*

After this the Count's interruptions were casual and far apart. Whilst examining his mail he would alternately read and write. Owing to the absence of Lawyer Harkins and the Judge there were no very exciting scenes. It was believed that the able Harkins and the Judge were not on very good terms, as it was only yesterday when Judge W— with a friend entering a restaurant near Del's to get

* Report, Guiteau Trial, 1882.

a dozen on the half-shell and a bottle of porter for lunch, espying Harkins said disgustedly, "Let us go somewhere else." It seemed evident to all that the Judge had a liking on the quiet for the Count, and yet at times, during the prisoner's cross-examination, his voice rolled thunder and his eye flashed fire.

The witnesses were well under way giving important testimony, when the prisoner at the bar took the opportunity of saying that two men had called at the jail to see him, and after the honour of being presented had refused to shake hands with him.

"They're loafers and cranks," he said irately; "they are perfect dogs; they came to insult a high-toned gentleman, and when I get out I'll know how to be even with them."

In vain the crier ordered silence in the court; the prisoner remarked, "that this was his funeral, and he was going to see the corpse safe through."

Finally the prisoner's counsel began the defence, and called witness after witness. They were all more or less unimportant, until the name Fräulein Marx was heard, and Ida's lady companion made her way into the box.

In the mean time the prosecution and defence remarked that it was not known when the trial would finish, as after the ordinary defence would

come evidence in sur-rebuttal, and there were still an hundred witnesses.

“Oh! I don’t mind,” cried out the Count, “my time is well spent here, and in jail I do little else than to write autographs.”

He stopped abruptly as Fräulein Marx took the oath and prepared to answer the questions which might be put to her.

The Count’s attitude was one of eager expectancy. It was noticed that he had become thinner these latter days, and his face wore a strange smile. The question: “When did you first know the prisoner at the bar?” put by the prosecution elicited a prompt response:

A.—“I met him in Hamburg twenty years ago. He was a robber and a scoundrel, called himself a Baron, and was transported with me for criminal complication in a murder.”

The prisoner’s eager look turned to one of blank , disappointment, rage, then bitter hate; a cold glitter crept into his eyes. He stretched out his hand and laughed as he said:

“So you betray me at last; you want revenge. Well—well—well;—curse you, get it if you can.”

The excitement amongst the audience became intense. His counsel hastily conferred with him and several waiting friends. There was a confused murmur

throughout the room, whilst the witness stood with an impassive face and calmly folded hands, looking neither to the right nor left, but seemingly in air. After more discussion a second question was asked. The answer came with amazing promptitude.

"I married you because I loved you and wanted to be a Baroness, but you betrayed even me. I got away from Toulon in a way intended for your escape—came to New York—and very soon recognized in the Count de Marcie the ex-Baron de Maincey of Hamburg."

"Stop the witness," screamed the prisoner, turning of a still more awful pallor. "Stop her; she's the biggest liar—"

Fräulein Marx smiled scornfully.

"Nothing can stop me," she said. "I escaped—as you did afterwards; and the German Government has since bestowed a free pardon on me."

"Which explains your cheek now," cried the prisoner; "and you knew it—when?"

"Before I saw you in London," she replied calmly, "when I wanted the two hundred thousand dollars."

The Count laughed;—laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Look at her," he said; "isn't she a wife any man might be proud of? Look at her and realize how worthy a woman I married."

“Oh!” interrupted Lucy Chromo in a loud voice; “oh!—and to think that he not only married Ida Foresti, and broke her heart, but begged me to get a divorce in order to marry him!—the wretch!”

It was impossible not to understand and fully appreciate Lucy’s words. The court re-echoed with exclamations, and the witness was not able to go on until order was restored.

She told the history of her life, and the noble prisoner’s; of the meeting with Ricard; the plot to make Rozen rob and betray Arundel; the final rupture, and the meeting in the Park. The public were roused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by her recital, yet with the exception of the prisoner’s scornful and frequent interruption, the dropping of a pin could easily have been heard.

“I let him—the prisoner—think that I was for him,” she added with a rising voice; “but revenge is sweeter than money.”

“Yes,” cried the prisoner, “when you have all the latter you want, and are sure about the former.”

“Then a fire of mutual abuse and retort took place between witness and prisoner. The crier no longer cried silence; the judge no longer gave any ruling; the questions and answers were categoric or

were not; the same mutual volley of recrimination and insult went on between these two strange and strangely-related human beings.

At last the prisoner arose with a threatening look, but suddenly sank backwards.

“Take her away,” he cried; “she’ll be my death.” Then he placed a hand to his side and looked wildly about.

The witness continued, and shrewd cross-questions brought out such alarming statements that the prisoner had little show for mercy. The tale of Ida Foresti’s life caused a profound sensation, and many an eye filled with tears when she described her death. The witness’s cold voice but added to the pitifulness of the story, and after that there was little to tell: she was dismissed and other witnesses were brought forth; each and all more or less fatal to the defence. Suddenly the prisoner’s counsel announced their case was closed.

The surprise was so great that judge, prosecution, and jury stared for some moments in a helpless sort of maze; an indefinable murmur ran through the court-room; and at last his honour comprehended that the trial was really at an end. The prosecuting attorney looked upon the announcement as a practical joke, and was so dumbfounded at the trial’s abrupt termination that he could scarcely find suitable words

in which to argue the case to the jury. His peroration, however, was a brilliant affair, although when he had concluded it was difficult to make out whether he thought the prisoner guilty or not. Happily his honour then gently hinted at murder, and gave the jury to understand that a crime of some sort had been committed in which the prisoner was implicated.

The Count next arose with a beaming smile, and remarked that he had a few words to say; whereupon he bowed to the audience, nodded to the jury, and blowing a white rose open to its fullest, adjusted it in his button-hole and began :

“Ladies, and gentlemen of the jury, you see before you not a criminal, but an unsuccessful man. I don’t need to plead not guilty, because I’m going to tell you truthfully the real story of my life; and I know, in a land where struggle is known and appreciated, when you have heard mine you will one and all but sympathize with me the more. I shall be obliged to inflict some painful disillusions upon you, but in a land where success must be bought at any price, you will realize that I am indeed worthy to be one of you. I early took for my motto the words of Horace, ‘Nil mortalibus arduum est,’ and determined to make my way in life and prove them at any cost. I shall be brief: the worthy

witnesses' pros and cons that you have heard are one and all incomplete, idiotic, no one so far having told you my whole career from the beginning; helpless blunders have so exasperated the artistic in my nature, that I feel it a duty I owe my talent, my exceptional education, and the world in general, to explain more fully; in fact I owe it to the gracious interest Gotham has ever taken in me, to tell her all I can about myself; and that all shall be told as faithfully as I know how to tell it: as Brutus said, 'If ye have any tears, prepare to shed them now.' My life has been a long conflict, a bitter struggle to succeed and put the best foot forward in the world. It has been short in one sense, but prolific of adventure. I was born a beggar in the streets of Mayence; parents, first in particular—unknown. In early youth I rose to the estate of barber: not caring to continue that humble but happy life, I longed to adventure and see the world. I am still young and—I have seen it. In a Mayence barber's-shop a client used to come to whom I bore a startling resemblance; an absurd intimacy grew up between us, and one day the idea struck me to put him out of the way, adopt his name, title, and estate. This I did with great punctuality, and became in twelve short hours the Baron de Maincey. I do not seek to affect you here, although

any one with a spark of soul or feeling has only to reflect on the audacity of my first stroke, not to also realize what fears, what agonies of mind and body I endured; not alone that of being found out, but of checking in its birth a career destined to reflect honour on any beggar, and do good in any world where courage, talent, and heart go hand in hand. Born to the gutter I tired of the palace, went to Hamburg, and there met and adored the gentle being you have just listened to, whose wit never equalled either her heart or her beauty. I married her. We became partners in—not iniquity—but the modern commerce of getting on in life. Frau Marx-Maincey soon began to bore me. Money was low, spirits were lower; a robbery and murder done in Lyons with sure intentions, but not sure hands—alas! interrupted our career for a little while. Toulon was not a disagreeable place, but my adventuresome spirit longed to attempt new deeds of daring. I felt the ardour of a Napoleon or a Bernadotte glowing in my veins, and bitterly chafed at the dungeon's restriction. I escaped; heard the dear wife was dead; then became confidential adviser, butler, valet, I don't know what, to several sovereigns: couldn't stand the routine of royal life. Slavery?—why the galleys was ease compared to it. I longed to see the home of my youth,

returned to Mayence, and found an old uncle, who kindly removed the 'T. F.' so wickedly branded on my arm; convenient slashes now and then, added to a real scald—result of a railway smash-up—effectually obliterated all traces of the convict's signature. Dear uncle, he is since dead—"

At this there was a visible interruption, and loud murmurs echoed and re-echoed in the court-room.

"Your uncle," inadvertently called out the prosecuting attorney; "surely not the late Count?"

Visions of a cathedral draped in black; a choir of mortals singing celestial music; the rich baritone of a sainted voice; the smell of incense—even the odour of violets—and the stately congregation of Gotham's best—a weeping world, passed in instantaneous panorama before the minds of all present. The prisoner took up and finished the lawyer's phrase.

"The same," he said gently; "a good man—alas! no Count—although well worthy to be one. He died as he had lived—a simple sausage-maker of Mayence."

"What!" screamed Mrs. Chromo. "What!" cried the lawyer; and "What!" were repeated on all sides.

The prisoner smiled blandly and reiterated his words.

"This is too much," groaned Lucy; "and my crape dress, amethyst necklace, and the flowers, the postponing of two balls, and as many as ten quiet luncheons—all, all for a sausage-maker!"

"The club flags at half-mast," murmured Florestan.

"The city-bell tolling down town," said Adam Chromo.

"Yes," echoed Lawyer Harkins, "and Gotham's Common Council meeting solely to pass resolutions of condolence to be offered to the Count."

"The postponement of our Chromo Literary Society for a month," groaned Prof. Protoplasm, wiping his brow with a lemon-coloured handkerchief.

"The condolences telegraphed by the President," said the head juror.

He was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing and half-strangled sobs which emanated from the judicial chair. His honour did not need to say what his and his wife's expression of regret had been. What they had cost! Every one present remembered them. In a vision he saw himself sending word to the Bench, "Too ill to sit to-day,"—saw himself flying to the tailor's to try on a new black suit; saw a fond wife and mother sacrificing the one public dinner she gave during the year; and as in a horrid nightmare felt himself writing, signing, and sending, an elaborate epistle attached to a basket of

orchids, whose every shade of colour was worth a fortune to a modest horticulturist:—all these efforts, and not for a defunct Count, but for a dropsical, dirty—ah!

He fanned himself violently, gasped, threw back his head as much as to say, “I am better now,” then waving his hand with graceful ease directed the prisoner to continue.

“I am really grieved,” said this latter honestly, “to have given you all such a shock; but how can you appreciate the noble efforts I have made to get on unless you know the truth of those efforts? Judge, Mrs. Chromo, Mr. Florestan, ladies and gentlemen, let me thank you all here now for those expressions of woe; letters, flowers, and hand-pressures of silent sympathy bestowed upon me at that critical moment; for, believe me, it was a critical moment, and required no small energy, misgivings, and art, to play it upon New York as I played it; especially when you realize that that uncle died fifteen years ago, and the wheels of memory almost refused to run backward. But to my tale:—I came to America; I met Rozen, an honest man but weak; he wanted speedy wealth, but hated great risks. I finally won him over, named him Vane for a travelling name, got him in my power, and only put him out of it when—I put him out of the way. Oh!

don't look horrified!—remember that I felt bound, some way, to elevate Gotham and her moral society. I felt that here I had found my true vocation and right place; here a title and such talent as I possessed could find the fittest scope for action. I have done five years of good service here in every branch of social life. Rozen stole money; I spent it, in first helping myself and then doing good to others. Mind, I am not the first man nor the last who personally applies Macchiavelli's saying, 'The first law of every human being is to protect himself—to live—and—to look out for number one.' That is just what I have always rigorously done, and I advise you all to follow in my footsteps. Be careful, however, never to have anything to do with white-livered fools and soft-hearted ones. Rozen was sentimental even when he helped Black Bill to escape."

"Black Bill!" echoed a dozen voices.

"Yes, gentlemen, Black Bill; I am that distinguished individual. Sorry I can't tell you all his history here; but as this is the century for memoirs, I have no doubt you will before long be speedily enlightened as to all his proceedings. As to the little Prima Donna, I am sorry that she took the affair to heart; but you remember Julia and the Don: 'Man's love is of man's life,' etc. etc. Most

jurymen have a weakness for Byron, and all seem to know the lines. I won't repeat them here, but women are all alike, take an episode for—an eternity, etcetera. I fear I am tiring you: but a few words more. I don't ask for my life, as you are sure to give me that; but I do ask the court to restore a trunk of relics, carried wantonly off—stolen probably by the police; these relics I need not say are a souvenir of my tender past, my earliest youth, when ambition warmed me with her glowing fires, and hope was the one lamp of my barber's existence. That trunk contains all my shaving implements; the razors with which I shaved the Baron; the old clothes I wore; some letters from my wife Adèle, when love was our sole collateral, and a bunch of faded flowers, which alone have power to awaken in me glad memories of a happy past. How many times after an evening at some ball the Baron would return home, look at his razors, and laugh as the barber at the way he had fooled the world as the Baron! Oh! my friends, those were sweet and invaluable, unpurchasable hours! Restore me that trunk, that even in my cell I may re-live them. I cannot say I found society-life agreeable,—jostling with fools, hob-nobbing with snobs, associating with idiots. Alas! how often, tired of the whole game, have I cried out with Mirabeau: 'My God, give me

mediocrity,' but my cry was never heeded. So I kept on the treadmill, repeating in my heart with Telemachus: 'Services! talents! merit—bah! belong to a cotery'—and I did. I must say I have found New York the easiest of all society, as here only two things are required—money and title. I have told you my faithful but partial history, as to the last wishing to do good, I see no earthly reason why every enterprising American may not alone follow in my footsteps but profit by my career; but let him beware of three things, however, any one of which may at any moment wreck the brightest of futures;—satiety of too much money—indigestion—and not keeping cool. The first engendered irritation; the second, bad temper; and the third, for the first time in my life, caused me to stand in my own light, to forget myself, and—and I struck the blow which brought me here. I take leave of you, gentlemen of the jury, and beg you will restore my cherished trunk, and bear in mind that I am merely a faithful follower, as all Americans should be, of the Macchiavellian precept: 'The first law of every human being is to protect himself, and—to live.' ”

The prisoner sat down amidst deafening cheers. His defence had indeed touched the enterprising American soul. After a charge from the Judge the jury retired; hours passed; his Honour looked

heavenward with vacant face but strangely questioning eyes; counsel and prosecution consulted together. The wildest chattering went on in the audience when the foreman re-appeared.

The chief jurymen waved his hand and announced neither acquittal nor condemnation, but the disagreement of the jury—ten being for acquittal, two for condemnation. There was a general murmur. The Judge smiled broadly; counsel, witnesses and public joined in a violent altercation, whilst the prisoner at the bar, amidst repeated thanks and protestations of affection for New York, was led away amidst dense enthusiastic throngs to await a new trial.

* * * * *

The next morning Gotham received another shock. The Count had died in the night; possibly stricken down by heart disease; but more probably by his first violent and sustained effort at telling the truth. He left this assumed will:

“I go to join the sausage-maker. Gotham, farewell! I leave to the New York Central Park Museum my trunk, containing the faithful toys of my youth. I bequeath these cherished souvenirs to budding America, begging it, every time it looks upon them, to aspire, to reflect, to emulate, to remember. Gotham, farewell! The end of this trial has brought

repose, repose has brought back the old ambition—the love of adventure is still so strong in me, that to make the acquaintance of a new world, I quit this one with pleasure. Alas! no nobleman dies in cell 16 of the Tombs, but a simple mortal, known to the world as the Baron, Count de Marcie and d'Orbach, but best to himself as the Barber of Mayence."

There is little left to tell to finish this history. New York, even the civilized world, wept the sudden quenching of a bright light, and never ceased reiterating what might have been. But, however much other metropolises may wail and refuse to be comforted, Gotham may still take heart: she cherishes innumerable noblemen in other forms and guises; perhaps with less classic memories, but with stronger digestions, colder hearts, and no less authentic titles.

Lucy Chromo has won; Adam will never give up the glue business, but has compromised by driving his carts down every Avenue excepting the Fifth. Flora married Pastor, and was thrown into, not a convulsion, but a marquise, five days after the wedding; legitimate heritage early assumed by her honourable spouse. Every now and then she threatens her husband to leave him to marry Baron

d'Alfredi, still the unique object of her affections—best man at her wedding, best friend of her heart. Professor Protoplasm and Miss Chandos-Cressy are still but betrothed. The Chromo-Literary Society goes on much the same as ever, and at the last meeting brought up the origin of cats. The Professor shone.

And Arundel? He never recovered the shock he had received on the quay, when Florestan told him the result of his victory. He fell ill, and was taken to his old hydropathic establishment, where he made a will, and left everything he possessed to Enilda. The great trial ended, in a moment of enthusiasm, still attached to water, he jumped into the river, and his body was recovered, but too late; life was extinct. Enilda in vain refused the fortune; but as it was left, not to her, but to her children if she ever had any, and after that to Florestan and his heirs, there seemed no way of getting rid of the money, which, by some peculiar destiny, was bound to be her inheritance. Charlotte Corday seemed to grow younger, although she never grew whiter; while Fräulein Marx respectably married Ricard, and went to Australia to build up a new home, a new house, and a new reputation.

And Florestan?

There was a quiet wedding in Grace Church

one morning in early January. Dr. Grayson gave away the bride, and Enilda Rozen took Ythan Florestan for better or worse. When her husband gave her his first kiss, little Cyril came up timidly :

“Here is a rose,” he said, “a white rose for my new mamma !” Then they walked towards the sacristy to sign the moral doomsday book.

Adam Chromo and Professor Protoplasm wrote their names as witnesses, in a flourishing hand ; then one by one the party left the church.

That night Florestan and his young wife arm-in-arm stood in the open doorway of the old house in Tenth Street, looking at the bright crescent which glittered in a pale semicircle in the starlit sky.

“Enilda ?”

“Yes, darling.”

“Shall I tell you something which will make you happy ?”

“That you love me ?”

“Yes, always that, but—something else. Perhaps our prayers have been answered.”

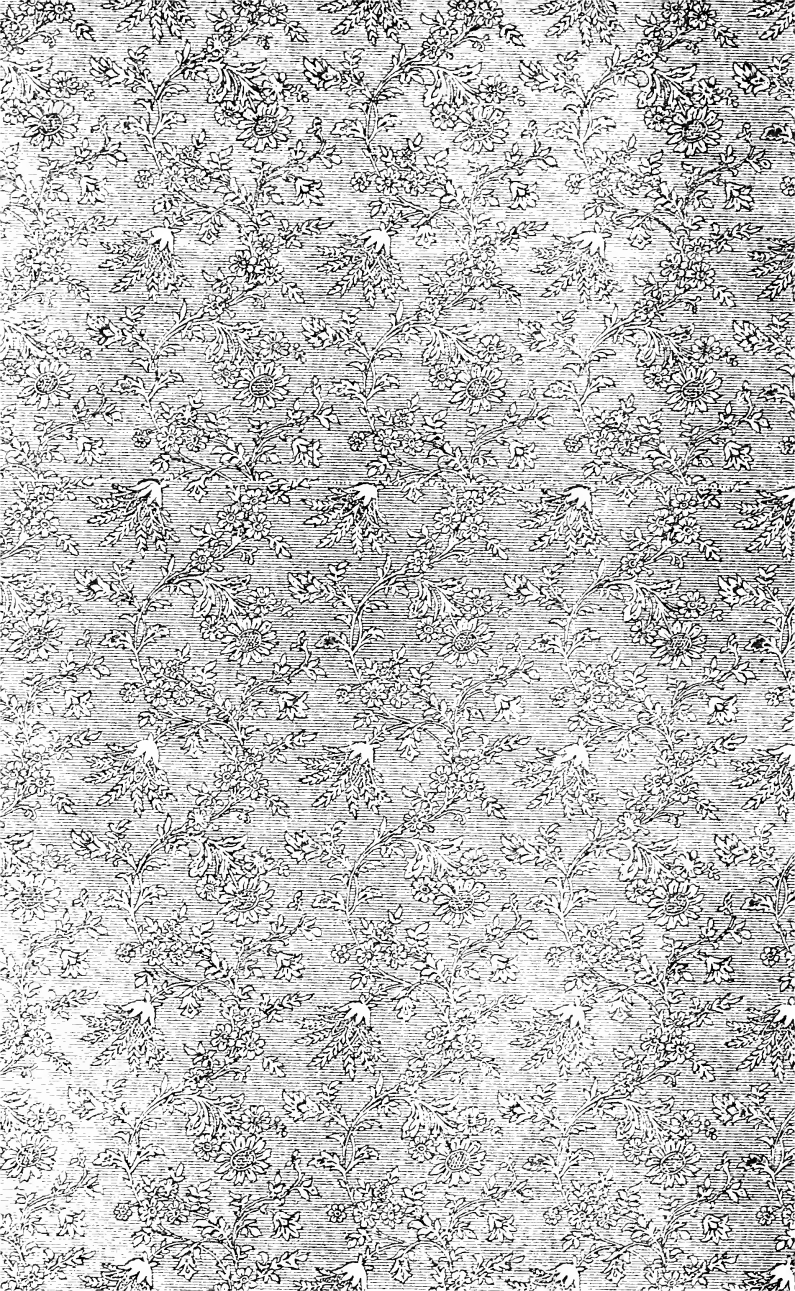
“Ythan, what can you mean ?”

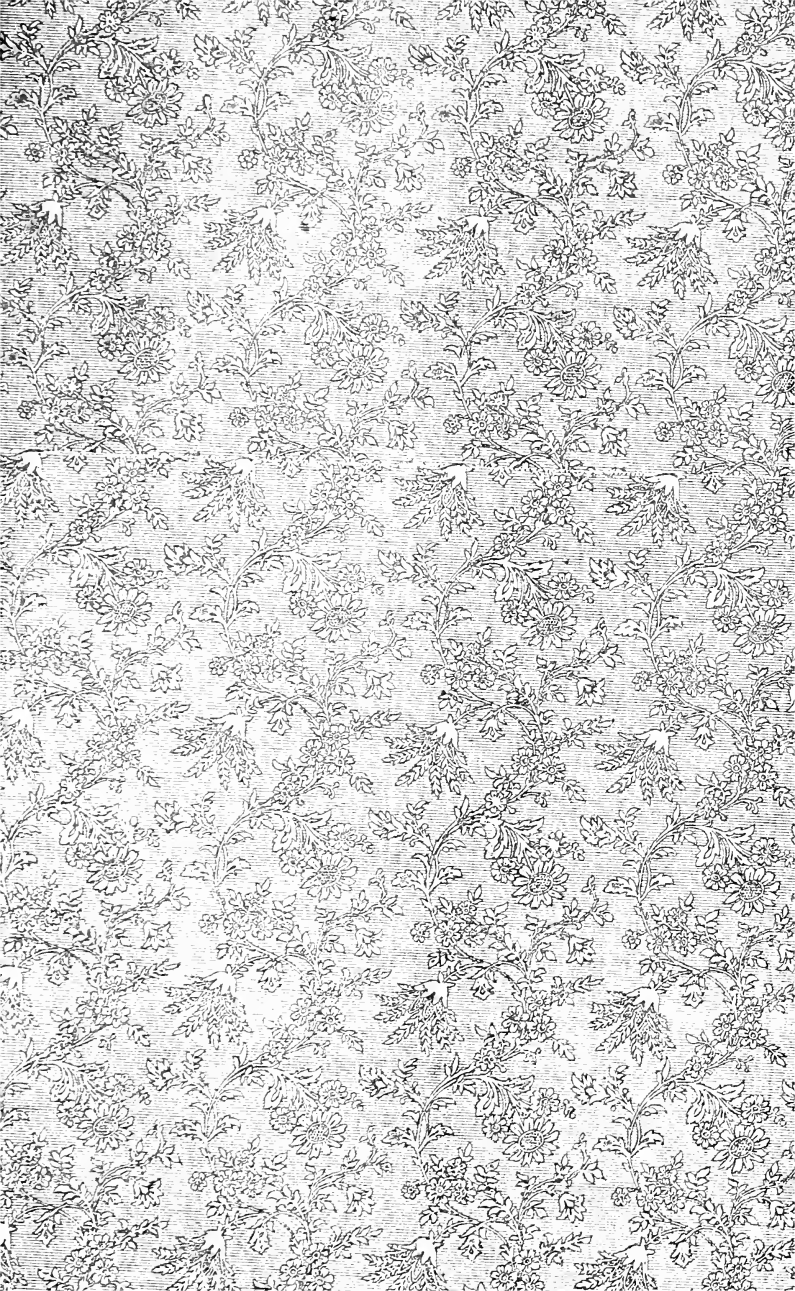
“Shall I tell you ? No ; read for yourself,” and leaning on his strong breast she read a paragraph in a London newspaper, which brought a look of perfect

happiness into her eyes. Only a simple notice of four lines, and yet it said volumes :

“The Lady Mildred Claremont has given birth to a son, born at Allison House. Mr. Claremont is hourly expected in town. Mother and child are doing well.”

THE END.





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